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The first number of AINSLEE'S MAGAZINE for the new year will be one of the finest January numbers that the publishers have ever got out. The excellence of the magazine during the past year, more apparent than ever before, has made inevitable a further and longer step in the same direction.

There will, therefore, be still more variety and more color and more interest in the January table of contents.

The complete novel will have these qualities to a very marked degree.

Will Levington Comfort

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MARY RAYMOND SHIPMAN ANDREWS

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whose short story "THE GOVERNOR'S DAUGHTER," in AINSLEE'S for October, made a sensation, will have one equally as good called "A CORNER IN WATER."

MARY HEATON VORSE

will have another of her "Jimmie" stories which she calls "THE BUTTER-IN."

QUENTIN M. DRAKE will continue his fine series of stories of army life, and there will be another of GEORGE LEE BURTON'S series on "THE QUALIFICATIONS OF A SEITOR."

Other short stories will be by ARTHUR STANWOOD PIER, EDMUND VANCE COOKE, DEMETRA K. BROWN, JOHNSON MORTON and LOLA RIDGE.

The articles on BRIDGE WHIST and those on the musical season in New York will also be continued.

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*** "Cecilia, kid," said the shop-girl, oiling the sharp saw of her voice as well as she could, "there's an onion outside. With a young man attached. I've asked him in to dinner. You ain't going to kick, are you?"

"Oh, dear!" said Cecilia, sitting up and patting her artistic hair. She cast a mournful glance at the ferry-boat poster on the wall.

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"Hetty, dear," sighed Cecilia, "I'm so hungry. What difference does it make whether he's a prince or a burglar? I don't care. Bring him in if he's got anything to eat with him." ***

For the rest of this story look in the December *Everybody's Magazine*.

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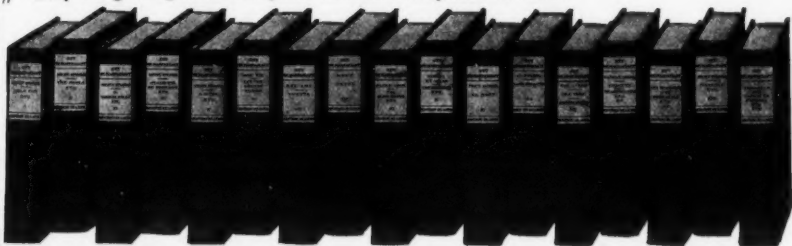
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"The Old Homes and the New," by Hon. Adlai E. Stevenson, former Vice-President of the United States.

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"The Sins of Society," by Joseph Medill Patterson, author of "A Little Brother of the Rich." Mr. Patterson says "That society women relegate all functions of usefulness excepting one—the bearing of children—and that they are not inclined to discharge this function as they ought."

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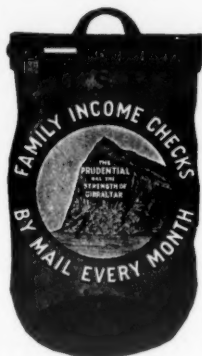
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THE MAGAZINE THAT ENTERTAINS

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AINSLIEE'S

VOL. XXII.

DECEMBER, 1908.

No. 5.

THE LETTER

Beatrix *Demarest Lloyd*

CHAPTER I.



HE pushed back the soft thick furs that hung upon her shoulders as she made herself comfortable in the pretty easy chair which madame had so gracefully indicated.

"Yes, an afternoon gown," she said luxuriously. "A cross between a bridge frock and the sort of thing one would wear for a bishop." She looked up and smiled. "You know exactly what I mean, I know you do."

Madame also smiled, and played with the long chain of bizarre design that showed to so startling an advantage against her black dress. "Of course," she smiled, with her handsome competent nod. "May I send you in a cup of tea, or anything, while I see what we can show you?"

"That discreet 'anything'!" laughed Mrs. Brinsmade. "No, thank you. I will just placidly wait." She pushed at the furs again. "Something different, quite different from any of the things you have made me," she added, her mind on the more important matter of the moment.

Madame turned a sweep of an advertising skirt. "I have just the thing,"

she murmured soothingly as she went away.

Mrs. Brinsmade waited placidly as she had promised, partly because that was her manner always and partly because the room was conducive to that sort of thing. The quaint French-gray furniture with its pale violet brocade was rococo but not distressing. The tiny square panes of the ivory-white sashed windows let in a diffused and quieting light. One or two palms seemed to hang their feathery branches in restful relaxation.

The whole place, while it reeked of extravagance, had not the faintest suggestion of urgency. Though it is safe to say that nowhere else was more money expended in a single day, yet money was never mentioned there. No one ever asked the price of anything, no suggestion was ever made that a trifling advance would be gratefully received. There were strenuous battles conducted from the invisible cashier's office, but it was all done with paper bullets and at long range. The suggestion of the reception-hall and show-rooms was that gowns were of the stuff that dreams are made of, and quite as unconnected with anything gross and material. And more of the feminine world had been seduced to their ruin by that very charming inconsequence than

ever swelled the boasted record of all the gay Lotharios that have saddened the world.

Mrs. Brinsmade was thirty, and prettier then than she had been at twenty when she was married and all society acclaimed her the most attractive—that being society's one adjective in that year—of all the brides of the season. She had still her girlish slenderness and alertness, her eyes were as bright and her mouth as red as any child's, and not till her hair turned gray would it lose its brilliant beauty. And if she was extravagant in the matter of dress she was also clever, and the result was ever a joy to all men.

She was frivolous—any one would vouch for that. She went everywhere, saw everything, wore everything, danced everything, heard everything, told everything, laughed at everything, won everything—except money—and seemed to enjoy the process. Brinsmade was a devoted and considerate appendage, never got in her way and never got out of it, took pride in her beauty and joy in adoring it.

She was very modern, too. Lots of old-fashioned ideas had forsaken her. She had had them once—silly dreams of beatific married existence with nobody but her lord and master in the whole world. But that sort of thing is incompatible with being one of the most popular young matrons in the middle set, and so had to be abandoned.

Moreover she flirted very gracefully, certainly successfully and perhaps harmlessly—an accomplishment not to be allowed to rest. How successfully she did it was evident to any beholder, how harmlessly no one except the group of men ever at her beck and wave could have told. Many people thought it had been far from harmless in the case of young Soysmith and, after he had gone away so suddenly to the Northwest, that she had really and cruelly broken his heart. But there were also many who denied it. Surely when a woman is young and lovely, men can be found to break their hearts about her without encouragement.

Madame came back presently, accom-

panied by a young model of Mrs. Brinsmade's approximate size and coloring, wearing a gown that should have brought any one luck in bridge and would have certainly done for any bishop in more senses than one. The model came to a stand in the center of the room and turned slowly about. Madame stood, her head on one side, fingering her bizarre chain.

"That is the newest skirt—a trifle trying perhaps, but on a slender figure! Do you notice the quaint arrangement of gold grelots underneath that loose lace? How prettily the jabot carries out the old-fashioned touch of the stock? The frock is really the most original creation we brought over."

Such were the things that madame murmured, as absorbed in the model as Mrs. Brinsmade herself, and quite as if she did not care in the least whether or no any one else appreciated it to the point of buying it.

Mrs. Brinsmade, sitting more erectly, was taking it all in with sharp eyes that needed no one to point out the principal points of interest. She was so thoroughly absorbed in the scrutiny that she could hardly have told herself how it was that just at that moment her mind took a leap and stood still quivering, just as one has seen a horse suddenly jump sideways from the approach of an errant newspaper.

The gown, the room, madame, the model herself, all faded from her understanding. She half started up from her chair. It had come to her with a shock that turned her cold that she had left the letter lying on the table. With a nervous hand she pulled her watch from her belt.

"An important engagement, I had forgotten all about it!" she half stammered to give countenance to her unmistakable change in demeanor. "Send me the frock, madame, it is quite what I wanted. I must hurry away."

The color burned into her face as she hurried out. The men waiting for the little elevator to take her to the street floor drove her nearly mad.

"Home—quickly!" was all she could say as she entered her brougham.

She had left the letter lying on the table. It had come in a late morning mail after the others had been brought up to her room. Yes, she had come down-stairs dressed to go out, and the maid had been just on the point of carrying it up to her. She had stepped into the library to read it, tucking her muff under her arm.

Then Henry, the butler, had come in with Cluff in his arms, saying the dog seemed to have a bad leg and asking permission to take him to the veterinary. She remembered now clearly laying the letter down. The dog was a great pet of hers and she had taken him from the man and gingerly, tenderly, examined the matter. Cluff had trembled and whimpered, and she had gone over to the window to get a better light on the subject. The end of it all was that she had come away, taking the dog herself in the carriage to Doctor Felman's, and she had left the letter lying on the table!

Her mouth and throat were quite dry, and there was a curious nervous trembling in her elbows. What had there been in the letter? She remembered only the first phrase: "It seems sometimes as if I simply could not live another hour when I am away from you." She would remember more of it by and by, but there were several pages that she had not read. How could she, how could she have done such a terrible thing? It seemed incredible that any one could do a thing like that. Good heavens, how slowly the horses were going!

There was a chance, of course, that no one had gone in there during this hour that she had been away. Loring had not left the house when she did, but he had risen late and was in a hurry, and there was the chance that he had rushed through his breakfast, caught up his hat and coat, and dashed for the subway without having set foot in the library.

Then Elena—suppose she had gone in for a book, or to write a letter. Elena would not read another's letter naturally, and yet—and yet— She had left the sheets lying open just as she

had pressed them back from their folds, and if Elena had sat down at the table to write she could not help seeing some of it at least. And the handwriting was not unknown to her.

She caught her muff so violently at the sides that it seemed she could have torn it in half. How could she have done anything so careless? Suppose Loring had gone into the library for some cigars—men would take time to get their cigars even in a race with death. Suppose he had gone in, and seen it lying there.

Suppose his eyes had involuntarily read that opening sentence: "It seems sometimes as if I simply could not live another hour when I am away from you." Suppose then slowly, reluctantly, as if forced to it against his will, his hand had gone out and lifted the letter from the table. Suppose he read it all, all that she had read and all that she hadn't? Good heavens, how slowly the man was driving!

What would he do? Or suppose Elena had gone in and the same thing had happened. What would she do? What a fool, what a fool she had been to let Miles write to her. The letters were nothing to her, he was nothing to her but an interesting amusement. He loved her so much that he could not believe she did not love him a little, and it gave a little spice to the things he said and wrote. He made love in a most entertaining fashion, and she was happy only when being entertained. So beyond an occasional lukewarm rebuke she had let him go his own gait, and now—

Was Fifth Avenue ever so crowded before? How on earth could she have forgotten all about the letter? Even with poor little Cluff whimpering in her arms, why did she not remember the half-read pages on the desk—and such pages! Suppose Loring went into the library for some cigars!

And so, *da capo al fin*. During the drive, which in reality was quite short, she went through a dozen fevers, varied by grisly chills. When the carriage turned from the avenue into the street on which she lived, she could have

sobbed with relief. Yet she eyed the house with a terrified apprehension. What was she going to meet inside that door? Suppose Loring had not gone and was waiting there for her? She was trembling so that she could hardly trust herself to get out of the carriage. If he had found it he would surely—yet there was the chance that the letter was still lying on the desk.

The pardonable interval between the ringing of the door-bell and the coming of the maid servant wore out her nerves like a long vigil. When the door opened she went in, trying to compose her anxious eyes and twitching hands. The maid uttered a faint monosyllable of surprise at seeing her back so soon, but she went on without a word, her dress making an urgent rustle about her feet as she hurried forward to whatever waited her.

The library was empty. The letter was gone.

CHAPTER II.

She stood looking down at the table, standing motionless. The familiar things, the bronze desk-fillings, the few books, the bowl of flowers, were all just as they had always been. It looked so quite as it should look that she could hardly believe the letter was not there, where she almost had expected it to be in spite of the wrenching fear that had tortured her on the way home.

Staring at the very spot where she knew she had left it, she asked herself if she had not perhaps, even in the unguarded moment when her attention had been diverted to the suffering of her little dog friend, mechanically, unconsciously put the telltale pages in some safer place. Her hands moved in her muff as if searching for the papers there.

Her lips were dry and she moistened them, reflectively. Then she suddenly turned and rang the bell.

It had seemed to her that perhaps she had been standing there in that frozen silence for an hour, yet it had been only a few moments, and the maid who had let her in was but just passing the door

on her way back to her other duties. The bell rang in nether depths, noiselessly to them, but the servant had seen the action and paused.

"Did you wish something, madam?"

Mrs. Brinsmade looked at her blankly an instant, and then gathering herself made a negligent movement to loosen the hot fur about her throat. "I came back for a memorandum," she said, "a list of things I wanted to do this morning. I laid it down here with some letters—did you see it?"

"I have not been in the room, madam. You are sure it is not there?"

"I am sure," replied Mrs. Brinsmade somewhat slowly.

"I will ask Henry, madam," said the maid, moving away.

Mrs. Brinsmade turned back to the table as the servant disappeared. Yes, unquestionably that was the very spot. She remembered quite distinctly standing there at the very corner when the butler had come in with the whimpering little animal in his arms. She had laid the letter down. And it was gone.

In a very few moments Henry came to the door. "Esther says you have mislaid some letters, madam," he said. "I have not seen them. I don't think I came back into the room at all after you went out. Are you quite sure you had them here, madam?"

Was she quite sure? Had she ever been as sure of anything else in all her life? The question irritated her. "Certainly," she said rather sharply. "I was reading one of the letters when you brought Cluff to me."

Henry gravely nodded. "I do seem to remember your laying some letters down as I came in," he said. "I will look about for them, madam." He pulled out the leather waste-basket from under the table as he spoke.

"They could not be there," said Mrs. Brinsmade. "Nobody would throw them away."

"No, there is nothing there," assented the man, straightening. He looked vaguely about the room, and then as his eyes came back to her he ventured to ask: "Cluff, madam—did the veterinary think——"

"Oh, the dog is all right," she answered absently. Could it be possible she was mistaken?

"I'm very glad of that," said Henry, moving the magazines about in continuation of the search. "I am very glad. I can't think how he came to hurt himself like that."

No, she could not be mistaken. There was no use. Some one had taken the letter. It must have been Elena or her husband. The conclusion made her want to be alone.

"That is all, Henry. It is not of any importance. You can go. You might ask any of the other servants—they might have carried the papers to my room." She moved heavily away from the table and walked toward the fireplace. "That is all," she repeated.

As the man withdrew she sat down in a high-backed chair near the hearth and unbuttoned her glove. She felt very tired, as if it were the end of a long day.

"It seems sometimes as if I simply could not live another hour when I am away from you. I am like a man suffocating under water, fighting to get back into the God-given air——"

Thus she remembered a little more, but of what value was the knowledge? There were pages of the letter that she had not read.

She felt curiously as though all the mechanism of life had stopped, as if she by this one mistake had locked the cog-wheels and brought the whole great machine to a stand. She sat there motionless and alone in the silent room, unable to believe that everything beyond those four walls was going on just as it had before.

A savage hatred for the man who had written the letter alternated in her breast with a sickening contempt of herself. Why had she ever permitted him such a liberty? He was nothing to her, and surely she did not make herself any the more desirable to him by making herself the more accessible. She had wanted him to dream her desirable—it flattered her, it had on one or two occasions lent great spice to an otherwise dull situation. But when it

came to his being essential to her it was monstrously ridiculous. She did not care, had never cared, whether she ever saw him again or not. As it was now, very, very fervently she did not want to see him.

Yet she had never forbidden him to write her in the wild way he had, she had even at times let him say some of the things that made his letters so interesting. It had all been harmless enough, she told herself, or would have been if she had not been so abominably stupid.

Was it Elena or her husband who had found the letter? She did not know which would be the more terrible. Elena, who had come to spend the winter with them, she was almost afraid of. The girl was so amazingly narrow-minded for a clever person, she had told herself. Now she called it by a different name, but she was vastly the more unwilling to trespass in the girl's eyes. Elena was only twenty, but she had a maturity of thought that made her an interesting companion to a man twice her age. She was clear-headed and sane, for all her sparkling youthfulness, and her calm knowledge of evil had not in the least softened the sharp line of her standards.

Rosa Brinsmade had enjoyed having the younger woman with her, had been glad of the girl's evident and sincerely expressed admiration, and being humanly covetous of that incense, was sickened at the thought of its being no longer offered at her shrine. She dreaded the idea of having Elena about, knowing that she was held in contempt and disapprobation.

But then, was that not better than that Loring had found the undeniable evidence of her duplicity? How her half-benumbed, half-overactive brain went around and around in its treadmill! Elena—Loring! Loring—Elena! Oh, what a fool she had been!

She sat in the high-backed chair that Loring had called her throne, still holding her muff between her limp hands. She, who had always been their queen and had grown to want their admiration, how could she look upon her deposed future?

She had been there quite a long while when the voice of Henry at the door startled her. She turned nervously at the first sound of it, her heart leaping up in a shock of apprehension and refusing again to return to its normal place.

"I beg your pardon, Mrs. Brinsmade, but Colton wishes to know if you meant to dismiss the carriage, or wanted them to wait?"

She heard the question and considered. Should she go out and release herself for an hour or so from the surroundings that seemed in themselves to condemn her? A vague desire to go among people who knew nothing of the horror that so cheapened her, even if they were nothing but tradesfolk, gave place, however, to a curious morbid conviction that she must remain there on the spot, to be ready, to be on the defensive.

"Tell Colton they may go," she said. Then: "Wait a moment."

Henry, in the act of bowing to withdraw, paused.

"Miss Elena, is she at home?"

"Miss Elena went out about half an hour after you did, madam. She said she would be back from her ride in time for luncheon."

"Oh!" said Mrs. Brinsmade. "And of course Mr. Brinsmade went downtown at the usual time?"

"I should say, madam," replied the man, "that he was a little later than usual."

"Thank you." She rose slowly as the servant left the doorway, and even in unfastening her coat stood looking at the place where the letter had been lying. If only she could wish it back again in her own hands!

She left the room finally and went up-stairs, slowly as if she were very tired.

CHAPTER III.

She went into her little morning-room, after she had taken off her wraps, and sat down at her desk. The door into the hallway she left open, and not a footstep sounded on the stairs that she did not turn and watch to see who

passed. Mechanically, she busied herself with some social notes, perfunctory stereotyped acceptances and rejections of invitations that required no great attention. The clock marked away the minutes, and the hands crept nearer and nearer to the luncheon-hour. As the inevitable meeting with Elena became more and more imminent, she grew physically nervous. Her hand became almost too unsteady to continue its half-mechanical occupation, she felt her eyebrows twitching, and knew that she was pale.

At last the step that was unmistakably Elena's sounded on the stairs, with the faint jingling of the dainty little spur on her left boot.

Rosa Brinsmade drew a deep breath, and laid a heavy hand upon the pile of filled envelopes beside her as if steadying herself to rise. But she only turned her head as Elena passed the door.

"Been for a ride?" she called, as lightly as her stiffened voice permitted.

There was a pause. Elena had gone by. Mrs. Brinsmade felt a sinking terror overpower her, and the hand outstretched upon the desk closed slowly and rigidly. Then the girl appeared at the door.

"Did you speak to me?" she said.

She stood there, her heavy coat covering her habit, the severity of her headgear and general get-up contrasting with the dainty disorderliness of the boudoir. To Mrs. Brinsmade's imagination, she held herself obviously aloof. Contrary to her usual custom, the ride seemed to have left her pale. There was a sharp line in the lips of her mouth that Rosa had never seen before.

"I asked the brilliant question: Have you been for a ride?" repeated Mrs. Brinsmade, trying to smile.

"Yes," said Elena. "Yes, I have been for a ride."

Under her tightly plaited brown hair, her eyes showed lightless and cold. The older woman wished in a quick frenzy that she could know what they were hiding.

"It's a heavenly day," she said. "Was the park lovely?"

"Yes," said Elena again.

Mrs. Brinsmade waited an instant, and then catching her breath in a stifled gasp, turned back to her desk. "Luncheon will be ready very soon," she said.

"I know. I am a little late," said Elena. After an infinitesimal pause she added: "I did not go out quite so early as usual."

The gentle tinkling of her spur sounded in the stillness as she went on to her own room.

Rosa Brinsmade's eyes traveled upward from the note she was writing, and stared at the photograph of Paderewski that hung upon the wall in front of her. "I did not go out quite so early as usual." There had been a world of meaning in the phrase, in the little pause that preceded it. Her pen sagged in her fingers and the tip rested upon the blotter. It was quite evident to her that Elena knew about the letter. She circled her throbbing temples with one cold hand and pressed them hard, resting her elbow on the desk. What was she going to do, what was she going to do?

She was at the luncheon-table before Elena and busy with the tea-things when the girl entered. Her trembling hands seemed feverishly to want something to do and to be painfully unable to do anything successfully. The tongs caught in the handle of the sugar-bowl and rattled irritatingly as she tried to release it. She gave it up petulantly, and put the lumps into the cups with her fingers. Her eyes, under their fluttering lids, glanced continuously, briefly, at Elena.

The girl had changed her riding-costume for a dainty beruffled bodice and dark skirt. Her trim belt outlined the slenderness of her immature body. Her hair, dressed more loosely, softened the uncompromising look of the square white forehead. But the eyes were as inscrutably cold as ever.

"Did Marion ride with you to-day?" asked Rosa, as she handed Henry the completed cup of tea, keeping her attention fixed upon the transfer of the delicate porcelain to the tray.

"No," said Elena. "I was a little

late. The groom said she had gone on ahead."

"That was too bad."

"I did not mind," replied the other. "Sometimes it is better to be alone."

Rosa Brinsmade felt her teeth meet sharply on the tip of her tongue. What torture this sort of thing was going to be! If she only knew that Elena had taken the letter, only knew positively that the girl was in possession of her folly, she could find relief in herself bringing the subject out at once. Even an open rupture through a complete understanding would be better than this maddening uncertainty. But if it was only her overactive imagination that read a multiplicity of meaning into Elena's manner and speech, why should she needlessly betray herself by speaking of the letter at all?

There was something odd about the girl, she was quite sure of that, above and beyond any change that her guilty consciousness might imagine. And if indeed she had read the letter, what was she going to do about it, beginning this way? Was she going to keep silent about it always, just wordlessly despising the woman she had admired, and punishing her with an atmosphere of repressed contempt?

And if that was what she was going to do about the letter, what was she going to do with it? Would she leave it in Rosa's room without any message, would she destroy it, or would she girlishly undertake to return it to Miles Peyton?

"I took Cluff to Doctor Felman's this morning," Rosa said in a desperate attempt to keep talking. "The poor little pig had a sensitive place on his leg, but the doctor says it is nothing serious."

Elena looked up. "I am sorry he is hurt," she said.

"And after that I went to Madame Thérèse's and ordered a frock—at least I bought the model. It is very pretty."

"Your frocks are always perfection," said the girl.

Involuntarily the woman's eyes appraised her. Had there been a covert emphasis in the remark?

"And then I was going shopping," she continued, keeping her eyes on Elena's face. "But I found in my excitement over Cluff that I had left my memorandum on the study-table and I had to come back."

She saw the girl's eyebrows lift, as she intently watched the buttering of a bit of roll.

"And I had my trouble for my pains," she went on, "for I couldn't find it when I got here. I left it on the study-table."

"Yes," said Elena. "You said so before. And wasn't it there when you came back?"

"No," said Rosa Brinsmade.

The hot-water urn made a comfortable singing in the silence that followed.

"What are you going to do this afternoon?" asked Rosa after a distressful pause.

"I am going over my accounts," said Elena unexpectedly. "I want to see exactly how much money I have in the bank."

Mrs. Brinsmade stared at her. "Why?" she asked.

For an instant the girl did not reply. She put out her hand toward her glass and the other woman saw that it trembled. She drank a little of the water before her voice came.

"The Shriver girls are going abroad with their father," she said then. "They were teasing me to go with them the other day, and I have been thinking it over. I said no when they proposed it, but I am not sure now but I will do it, if I have enough money."

Rosa continued to stare. "But I thought you were going to stay with us."

Elena's face grew even paler as she answered this, without lifting her eyes from her plate. "I know," she said. "But I should like very much to go. And I think you and Loring will be glad to be alone together again." She spoke with deliberation. "No matter how good and generous they may be, young married people are not quite happy except when they are alone together."

Mrs. Brinsmade forced a laugh.

"What nonsense!" she said. "We are not young married people—do you count ten years as nothing?"

"Still you are young," said Elena, "and you are married."

"That is no reason for you going away, I am sure!" exclaimed the other, somewhat quickly.

"Oh, that is not the reason, of course," assented Elena.

Mrs. Brinsmade crumbled a biscuit upon her plate. "And what is this reason, then?" she asked, trying to keep a threatening tremulousness out of her voice.

"There is no real reason except that I should like to go, just for a change," replied the girl. Mrs. Brinsmade watched a dull color appear in the young face and disappear again. "You would not mind if I went?"

"Why certainly not, if you want to go," said Rosa somewhat heavily.

So that was to be the way out of it! Elena could not bear to remain under her roof any longer. The very food set before her she apparently could not eat. To do the woman justice it was more than mere wounded vanity that cried out within her. She herself was quite amazed at the pain this revelation cost her. She had grown to love Elena with a sincerity she had scarcely understood until now that she was losing her. A pain in her throat strangled her, and she could have put her face in her hands to cry. What had she not put in jeopardy in indulging herself in this wicked—no, it was not even wicked—this contemptible flirtation.

She had not really realized it before. It had seemed harmless. It had seemed that she was risking nothing. Now she saw what she had done. She had gambled with a love that was dear to her, with another love and trust that she had grown too accustomed to, as some women wear negligently their familiar jewels. She had risked bringing a pain and a shame to this girl who had adored her, a greater pain and shame to the man who held her dear above all the world. She had felt that because she gave nothing but a divided attention to the surreptitious love-ma-

king of this other man that she could lose nothing. The actual awakening to a sense of all the dear things she had jeopardized stunned her. She sat almost staring at Elena.

It had happened to be Elena who had found the letter. But through no virtue of hers was it true that Loring was not this moment going through a torment of abasement unspeakable, or that her unworthiness was not being cried aloud in the streets through the treachery of one of her servants, to her shame and his. She had flattered herself that she was undefiled because she had said nothing in response to these letters, because she had always kept Miles Peyton at the distance prescribed for all men. Undefiled—she, whom Elena could no longer bear to see!

A weak resistance opposed the impulse to let down the barrier of pretense and beg the girl to forgive her, to explain that it was not quite so bad as it seemed, to implore her to remain with her and see for herself that she was not wholly wicked. But with a shudder she told herself how futile such a course would be. What Elena knew to be true was enough. She could not add to the girl's misery by asking for a forgiveness she did not deserve and had no right to beg.

She was aware suddenly that Elena, as at the end of her endurance, had risen, stammered an excuse, and left the room.

CHAPTER IV.

The hours of the afternoon dragged hideously. She sat alone in her room a prey to ugly thoughts. The house was absolutely quiet, and more than once the sense that she had brought her world to a standstill came upon her. Or rather it was far more as if she, in trust of a car-load of people, had risked their lives in a foolhardy attempt to cross a tampered road-bed and had brought them all to a tragic and unnecessary end.

Once her maid disturbed her to ask if she were dining at home, and receiving an inattentive negative, had

asked what gown madame would wear, and had waited insistently for a reply. Rosa, unable more than unwilling to give her attention to the triviality, said that it did not matter—anything! And was left again alone with herself, a companion she would gladly have avoided and yet the only one she could endure.

As the darkness fell she moved from her chair to the window-seat and watched the night gather in the street. It had begun to rain, and the city looked depressed and desolate.

The hours of the late afternoon brought her nothing but a deeper soul-sickness. She knew without being told that Elena was not in the house. She felt the girl's absence, poignantly felt that she had gone out because she could not endure to be under the same roof with such a woman. A hundred times she could have abandoned her suffering nerves to the so-called relief of tears, but the very culpability of her grief seemed to forbid such resource. She ought to suffer—well, great heaven, if that were true at last she was fulfilling the measure of her duty.

Over and over again she rehearsed her wonder that she had allowed things to come to such a pass. In the revulsion that waits upon discovery, she saw how far removed from any real interest was the affair that had brought her so low into the dust, and her mind was filled with amazement that she had so blindly gone on to such destruction for so little cause.

It was quite late when the maid came again, with a suggestion that madame had barely an hour in which to dress. Rosa obeyed the summons mechanically, feeling that she would have sat there until morning had not the servant roused her from her painful absorption. Monsieur had not come in yet, Babette told her, as she unfastened her frock, and he was usually home so much earlier.

Even this fact assumed the proportions of a torture. What did it mean? On any other day she would not have given it a thought. It would have meant a panicky movement in the mar-

ket, the unexpected arrival of a friend from out of town, a pleasant antepandrial hour at the club. But with the oversensitizing of her nerves, she began to read all sorts of distress into the incident, and she watched her face in the glass, as the woman dressed her hair, as if she and those reflected eyes were considering a tragedy.

When at last the familiar boom of the house door echoed dully through the house she caught her breath and listened. Unconsciously she watched the door, as Babette knelt before her, fastening her delicate slippers. She seemed to be listening with her eyes. The steps on the stairs would have been inaudible to any less strained attention than her own. She passed her handkerchief across her lips, and the hand that drew her ruffled skirts away from her ankles twitched and tightened. The footsteps gained the top of the stairway, came down the hall, and passed her door.

"Monsieur has come in," said Babette, getting to her feet. "He is very late to-night, monsieur."

The door between her room and his was closed. She rose from her dressing-stool, smoothing her petticoats with her faltering hands. Then she went over to it and, knocking softly, turned the knob.

Loring was standing as he had come in, drawing off his gloves. He was facing her and his look was dull and tired.

"You are very late," she said, steadying her tones as if she held her voice in both hands. "We are dining at the Merrills'. You have only twenty minutes or so."

"I had forgotten," he said listlessly. His man came into the room behind him as he spoke.

"Is anything the matter?" she asked, wondering how her lips could frame the words.

He looked at her a moment steadfastly. "I have had a hard day," he said at last, turning away.

She left the door ajar and went back to her waiting maid to complete her toilet. Her heart which had seemed as

thick as lead had suddenly begun to beat in a giddy lightness. She suffered herself to be gowned and jeweled, feeling as if each instant would bring collapse.

The drive in the carriage to the house of their host and hostess was taken in comparative silence. Once she had ventured to say that she was sorry he had had a trying day, and he had merely replied that he would rather not talk. She was conscious of both apprehension and relief at this ambiguous expression of his preference, the latter because it was with the greatest effort only that she could force her trembling lips to speak to him, the former because his tone set her mind again on its terrifying path of anxious questioning.

Perhaps they had been together, Loring and Elena, when they had found the letter, or perhaps Elena if she had found it had taken it to him. She knew the girl well enough to doubt this, and yet one never could predicate what a young woman may do under the inspiration of a youthful sense of duty.

Rosa gathered herself as they reached the house with an effort that she feared was almost visible, or which would have been visible had Loring been paying the slightest attention to her. He stood silently beside her waiting to be admitted, and if he, too, were struggling to lift himself into a genial dining mood, at least he gave no sign.

Yet he entered the drawing-room with her as like his usual self as possible, and she saw him later across the table and at some distance from her, smiling and talking as he had refused to smile and talk with her. She could not help but look at him continually, and she could not help but see that he ate nothing, and only sipped his wine with an absent indifference.

She was seated between the young author of a successful play and an elderly critic, who relieved her of a greater part of the burden of conversation—for burden she felt it to be that evening—by conducting an amiably hostile discussion across her plate about the modern drama. She compelled herself to listen, somewhat because she felt

she must take her intermediary part, and a little because it was a relief to be even for disconnected moments partially oblivious to her own distress.

Luckily it was a subject that could be made to last through an indefinite period of time, with judicious use of all its tributary interests. Yet she felt that even so fruitful a theme was being wrung dry, and was relieved of a new sense of strain when her hostess rose.

"The story of 'Faust' as a dramatic principle goes back to a period antedating the Norman invasion. When it was produced in France by Rutebeuf it was a mere importation from England," her elderly neighbor was saying pedantically as she followed the example of her hostess, gathering up her long gloves and her scarf. She saw, on leaving the room, that the young playwright had moved over into her place.

The ensuing interval of time before she and her husband were again in their carriage on their way home seemed to her interminable, though as a matter of fact they were the first to go and departed to a chorus of protesting voices. Truly this school of the world had trained her well, she thought, when she found herself pausing at the head of the stairs with a backward look and a smile at her host as she said:

"Well, Loring, you see, has had a hard day and I really must take him home."

She knew he had heard it as he waited for her in the lower hall, and she caught a look of wonderment upon his face as she joined him that quite matched her own amazement at her temerity. Yet might it not be perhaps that he was merely surprised at her unusual thoughtfulness? After all, he had told her on other occasions that he had had a trying day. She was clinging to a hope in which a spark of life yet lived, feeble as it might be, that at least Loring knew nothing of the letter.

She found herself subjected to insurgent waves of a mad desire to know where the letter was. What would she not give to know! If only she dared turn to him and ask him, frankly, point-blank, and have at least the relief from

anxious uncertainty. And yet—if he knew nothing of the matter, if Elena had found the letter and had told him nothing, what a fool she would be to open up for herself another avenue of adventurous pain.

Yet so tormented was she by a desire to know more of what he knew or did not know, that she did not leave him, as she usually did, to go to her room when, on entering the house, he turned aside, into his library. Moreover she had bethought herself of something she wanted to say to him.

He had let them in with his latch-key, and had not taken off his coat in the hall, and he now faced her as he slipped out of its heavy warmth, with something like a question in his face.

"I wanted to speak to you about something," she began.

She had instinctively moved toward her own particular chair, when he turned and dropped the clumsy folds of his fur-lined coat across the arms of it. She stopped and a hurtful sense of rebuff assailed her. It was a little action. At another time she would have thought nothing of it. But to-night it assumed other proportions. He had called the chair her throne, and he no longer found it fitting that she should sit in it. Half leaning, half sitting, on one of the arms of the chair, he was lighting a cigarette, and she wondered if he was aware of her frustrated movement toward her accustomed place. His lowered eyes intent upon the flame of the match were unreadable.

"Certainly," he said indistinctly.

She paused, looking at him. What she had been about to say was for the moment blotted from her mind. How negligently he sat there, waiting for her to speak. And yet—

"What makes your hand shake so?" she asked involuntarily.

Loring turned a bit in his position, swinging one arm over the back of the chair. He blew out the match and flung it into the fireplace.

"I fancy I have been smoking overmuch," he said, without looking at her.

She had never seen him sit before while she was on her feet, and yet she

knew he had not done this thinkingly. Was there under that serene exterior a new emotion that made him oblivious to what he did?

"You wanted to say something—about something," he said at last.

"Yes, about Elena," she answered mechanically.

Was there a sudden lifting of the lids letting him look at her for a brief instant, or was it her fancy? She saw him sitting there, one foot on the ground, one swinging lightly in his poise. He was blowing the smoke from his mouth, his eyes were on the burned-out match in the fireplace. She might have been mistaken.

"The Shrivvers are going abroad," said Rosa. Her hands gathered the fur-bordered wrap she wore as if the action helped her to concentrate her thoughts. The excuse for her coming into the room at all was so far removed from her reason for being there she found it hard to keep her attention sufficiently upon the secondary thing. A vague wonder passed through her mind at the thought that a mere physical action of mindless fingers could be of assistance to her in controlling so whelming an intention. "They have asked Elena to arrange to go with them. She told me to-day that she would like to go. She said she was going over her accounts to see if she could afford it."

As her fluttering fingers played with the fringe of her coat, her eyes observed him. They were eyes partially unconscious of what they saw, yet with enough volitional perception to be amazed at the slow reluctant change of his face. It went from a mere fleshy covering of the bones of him into a confession of spiritual sensation. Her voice hesitated in bewilderment and ceased. The pause was hanging like a curtain between them. Then at last he looked at her without altering his position by a degree of an angle.

Thus roused, she went on with a palpable difficulty. "I think she wants to go," she said, "she would be glad of the change. I thought that"—the word "we" had never stuck in her throat before, why should it now?"—"that we

might make her a little present of the money and let her go. I know of no one whom I would be more glad to help toward happiness than Elena."

Loring rose as her voice ended, and going toward the chimney leaned his arm on it and his head on his hand, looking down quite as intently as if there had been an absorbing fire there to hold his interest. The gray vapor from his cigarette streamed upward and caught in the thick glossy mass of his diligently brushed hair, whence it as languidly wreathed above his bent head, as if his brain were meditatively on fire. So long he stood motionless, voiceless, that she could not endure it. And with those uncertain fingers forever busy with the knots and fringes of her wrap, she spoke again.

"She only told me about it to-day. It seems they have been plaguing her about it a long time. I don't mean to ask this, Loring, for myself. Understand me quite in that. I meant merely that if you would like to give Elena this pleasure it would make me happier."

He turned a trifle in the following pause, and the glance of his lowered eyes went from the fire-dogs to the brass railing of the hearth, from there to the rug, and from there to her slippers. He made a faint gesture of squaring his shoulders, and then slowly his glance went upward to her face. There was a strained look in his eyes that all his countenance with the lids lowered had been unable to express to her.

"What—" he said, and stopped. He drew an unconsidered whiff from his cigarette and gathered himself. "What do you think about it?" he asked, in an unnatural tone.

She was so intent upon his bearing that she hardly knew what she said. "I have told you. So far as I am concerned I should be glad to give her this pleasure. I do not want to ask you for anything beyond what you feel in these times you can afford to do. I shall miss Elena"—she was conscious of not saying it naturally—"but I have been more or less alone before, and I shall get used to it."

He went back again and sat on the arm of her chair, the chair she had been so cleverly prevented from taking. "If you would like," he said very slowly, "to send Elena away with the Shrivvers I shall be only too glad to do my part."

"Thank you," she said, even while she turned the sentence over in her mind.

She was aware of his eyes again, upon her for a brief unrecognized instant. "I wish," he said in the same way, "that you would never thank me for anything."

A silence fell between them. "Then may I speak of it to Elena to-morrow?" she ventured desperately. The oppression upon her seemed greater than she could bear.

"Certainly," he replied.

He sat there so unmovingly staring into the grate that she moved away at last in sheer nervous uncontrollability. "I am going up to take off my things," she said.

He did not answer her, and she left him sitting so, motionless, on the arm of her throne before the lightless hearth.

Babette was waiting for her, not sleepily as usual, since they were at home so much earlier than was their custom. Mrs. Brinsmade came into her bedroom more conscious of a wonder that she had been able to carry her part through these hours since she had last left it than of any other feeling. She was undressed in this pointless apathy, and then sent the maid away.

The moment she was alone she began to think. She put her fingers into the waving hair at her temples and slowly paced the room. She had a feeling—she wanted to define it clearly to herself—that Loring knew. The reasons for this belief were slight perhaps, but the conviction was strong upon her. There was, to begin with, the indubitable fact that some one had taken the letter. Then came the vaguer evidence of her senses. Loring had been constrained and odd all during the evening, and the little fact of her having been excluded from her usual place had

great weight with her. But the strangest of all the strange things she had to think about was the way he had changed color and pose and look when she had spoken to him of Elena's plans. Was it that he felt it odd she should have chosen "this night of all nights in the year" to ask him for something? Yet it was not for herself that she had asked it, and it was not a great thing.

She went the length of her bedroom and back again. No, it could not be that.

She paused then with a sudden new thought, and stood looking at the door of his room as if he himself had unexpectedly appeared there. Did he think she was trying to get rid of Elena?

The idea brought a slow flush into her face. Good heavens, did he believe that she— And yet, what should he not believe if he had seen the letter? If he had seen the letter! Her hot fingers fairly drove their nails into her temples.

Loring was thinking that she had found Elena in her way. He was thinking that her impulse to assist the girl to that pleasure she desired was purely a selfish and a loathsome intention to rid herself of espionage. Her head came up higher as the thought took clearer form in her mind.

Whatever she had done, and she was quite frank with herself in admitting the enormity of that, she did not deserve to suffer under any such stigma. Want Elena to go? Want to be rid of her? She almost put out her hands as if the girl were there before her. Could any one think that of her? Had she fallen so low that the man who loved her best in all the world should be able to doubt her most loving and renunciatory act? She had indeed lost the divine right to sit upon her throne in the presence of that one courtier, but at least this silent accusation should not go undenied.

She turned, and went out into the hall. The light silk of her dressing-gown fluttered in the opening of the door. She would go down to Loring and make him understand.

Silently in her slippers feet she hur-

ried down the stairs. For some reason, and it was not at all the swift descent of the steps, she found herself at the threshold of his library struggling for breath. With one hand on her heart, she pushed the half-open door completely open.

He was sitting just as she had left him, staring into the empty grate. The cigarette in his fingers had gone out.

"Loring," she said indistinctly, softly.

He lifted his head slowly and looked at her. There was no naturalness in the way he did it. She knew that yesternight he would have started up at the sound of her voice and turned to her with a vastly different bearing.

"Yes?" he said.

She stood there wondering what to say. To justify herself meant to admit and voice his right to suspect her—was indeed to admit everything. If she were to say that she loved Elena and would miss her, and that she had had no thought beyond that one she had stated of giving the girl a pleasure, she confessed to believing that he could have thought otherwise. And how could she bring herself to do that?

He sat motionlessly regarding her. His eyes were not accusatory, they were not sad. But they had a look in them that made her want to throw herself at his feet. Locked in the dumbness of this new idea, she remained standing voiceless in the doorway.

It endured for several moments. Then Loring moved. His eyes left her face. He flicked the cold cigarette into the fireplace.

"You had better go to bed," he said quietly.

CHAPTER V.

She woke late in the morning, after having spent the greater number of the night hours in sleeplessness. She woke to a confused sense of oppression and desolation, like a homesick child in a strange school. But this undefined melancholy became almost instantly a keen and bitter realization of the actual matters that her short lethargic oblivion had for one instant befogged. She lay

still upon her pillows and stared at the wall.

Babette, who had been looking in from time to time, found her thus awake some moments later and went to fetch her coffee. The little tray with its dainty individual service was brought to her in due course, but she regarded it listlessly.

"Monsieur sent up the letters, madame, as he went out," said the maid.

Wearily Rosa lifted herself to a more erect position, received the tray, and then sat staring at it. Beside the covered plate that held her hot muffin was a little pile of envelopes, and the topmost was addressed in Miles Peyton's handwriting.

Some movement of Babette in the room reminded her of the necessity to cloak her thought and expression a little more cleverly, and she absently stirred her coffee the while she looked at the familiar writing.

What did it mean? Had Loring so arranged the letters purposely? And if he had was it to intimate to her that he knew the significance this letter must bear to her now? Or could it be mere chance? If he knew the probable contents of these pages, as he must know if it had been he who had read the others, would he have sent it up to her at all? Truly hope is an eternal spring. She found herself greedily drinking of its waters. Did this silent bit of testimony not bear witness to the fact that Loring knew nothing of the matter?

She took the letters from the tray and laid them beside her, then she finished her coffee and restlessly bade Babette remove the tray.

For all she lay there so wearily the moment the maid had left the room she swung herself out of bed, caught up Peyton's letter from the counterpane, and threw it into the grate. It was the work of a moment to strike a match, set fire to the detested paper, and see it eagerly destroyed. She was back in her place and there was a mere unnoticeable mass of feathery blackness in the hearth when Babette returned.

A natural unreasoning hatred of Peyton had filled her soul during the last

twenty-four hours. He who had meant so little to her of happiness, now meant so much of misery. It was one thing to bear disgrace as the payment for an immeasurable joy, as some women had had to do, but to bear it for nothing! To pay with one's whole life and happiness for this! Her hands trembled over the other letters, and her eyes were dimmed with a mist of despair.

But although she read these other communications she was not thinking of them. The waters of hope had been but salty, and the resultant parched thirst showed them to be unavailing. Loring had gone out without speaking to her. And he had sent up her post with that envelope uppermost as a mere explanation of the reason why everything now was to be different. That was the conclusion to which she brought herself.

And yet it was far from being a conclusion in every sense of the word. It led to innumerable further inquiries. What did it mean? What line of conduct then had he decided upon? To say nothing, to do nothing, trusting to her to be sufficiently aroused now to a sense of the wrong she had been doing him to end it? Was he going to take no more initiative part than this?

Urgently as she put these questions to herself, they remained unanswered.

Later when she was dressed she went up-stairs to Elena's room and knocked. Instead of the girl's calling a response she came herself to the door and opened it. Her face was colorless and the lids of her eyes were heavy with the peculiar look that comes only from night-shed tears.

"Oh, is it you, Rosa?" she said. She seemed to be making a supreme effort to speak naturally. As on an after-thought she leaned forward and kissed Mrs. Brinsmade on the cheek. "Come in, won't you?"

"You don't look well," said Rosa. Her throat felt dry. She came into the room and sat down in a low wicker and chintz chair with the overcalmness of nervous strain. "Haven't you slept well?" What a question, with her woman's eyes upon the other woman's face!

"Why, no," said Elena, in a flat, absent kind of voice. "I didn't sleep very well. Did you?"

As on the previous day, Rosa Brinsmade felt herself turn cold under the girl's reply. Surely, surely there had been meaning in that polite inquiry. She could not trust herself to answer it.

"Loring and I," she said, and wondered that she could say it without changing color, "were talking about you last night. I told him about the Shrivvers wanting you to arrange to go with them and what you said about your accounts. And Loring and I thought——" Again she was fairly surprised that she could couple the names aloud. "We want to give you the trip as a little gift. So don't bother any more about your check-book and those tiresome things. We should love to do it."

Elena stood looking at her a moment, and then turned away to her dressing-table. She was a little behind Mrs. Brinsmade, but Rosa could see her hands nervously turning a silver-topped jar about and about.

"I think that is very good of you both," said the girl at last. "Very, very good of you. But you see I have bothered with the check-book and all those tiresome things, and I find I have enough, plenty in fact, to permit of this extravagance." She took in her breath audibly after this effort at naturalness.

"But that doesn't make any difference," persisted Rosa, turning in the chair so that she could see her. "Whether you could manage it or not, we want you to take the good time as a present from us."

Elena remained as she was standing, and the powder-jar continued to revolve slowly between her hands. Her eyes were upon it, but she did not see it. "I—I really can't," she said at last.

"But why not?"

"I can't. I appreciate it very much. But you have been too generous to me as it is, and I really can't take any more."

"My dear child, what nonsense!" said Rosa lightly, though her hands clasped the arm of the chair rigidly. "It is

nothing so tremendous. A couple of thousand dollars would do it, wouldn't it? It is a pleasure to us to feel that we can give you pleasure. You mustn't feel a sense of obligation with us, my dear."

The girl wet her lips and seemed to set them. "I am sorry," she said, without looking up. "I really can't."

There was color enough in her cheeks now. Rosa looked at her intently. She felt a desperation seize upon her.

"But surely you can give me a reason," she said. She was trembling as she said it.

Elena drew another difficult breath, and seemed about to answer. But there was a mere pause and the older woman had to be the one to speak.

"It is not as if it entailed a sacrifice on our part," she said because something had to be said. "You must not feel that we are making any effort in doing it. It is just the natural pleasant and sensible thing, that is all."

The girl was looking at herself in the glass now, in a stony way as if she hardly recognized the face of the reflection. Then she dropped her hands to her sides and turned to her cousin.

"I have told you that I think it is more than good of you and Loring. Please don't imagine I am ungrateful for the generosity you show me. But"—if she cast about in her mind for some new way to express herself she did not find it, and merely repeated doggedly—"I really can't."

Rosa Brinsmade set her little teeth tight together as one may do to control a chattering in a chill. But she was a more experienced actress than the younger woman. "I am sure Loring will not take no for an answer," she said, gracefully swerving from the subject. "You did not tell me when or where you are going."

"Their boat sails in about ten days," said Elena. "I believe we land in Cherbourg, but the plan is to go to the south, to the Riviera, and later to Italy and Egypt."

"You ought to plan to be in Italy in May," said Rosa.

"I fancy we shall have to be satisfied with April," replied the girl. "Mr. Shriver wants to get back by the first of June."

How the talk ended, and how she got away from the room and into her own room again Mrs. Brinsmade never knew. There was mingled in her feeling for the girl the love for the sister she had never known and the child she had never had, and she had to confess to herself, now that she had apparently lost it, that the reciprocal affection had meant a great deal more to her than she had ever known.

At the first she had felt that her old place of supremacy in the household, her throne and her queenhood, their adoration and admiration, had been hard to lose. She had felt herself that it was because of a wounded vanity that she had so suffered in the first throes of that agony of abasement. But she realized, partly to her own horror and partly to her own glory, that it was in real undeniable love that she had been hurt.

She had wondered sometimes if she possessed these usual and elemental emotions. Because one person's admiration and flattery were as acceptable as another's, she had never felt it possible that she should find herself craving the love of some one or two particular people. She had been rather glad of this lack in her nature. It had made it possible for her to be prodigal and extravagant, to throw away much of the great quantity of affection she had always received, and she had never dreaded a day when she should be bankrupt in love and desolate. But now she understood. Love and admiration were still obtainable from any of several dozen sources, but she wanted it from Elena and Loring, and nothing but theirs would ever make her happy again.

Elena would not so much as take a gift from their hands, because hers were in it quite as much as his. Why, indeed, should she, since she could not even eat the bread upon their table? Yet it seemed a cruel thing. Rosa understood at last what she had heard read and

sung and seen painted about this thing called love. It was not that one might be deprived of the love, but to be forbidden to serve a beloved one, that was wherein lay the eternity of hell.

She felt her room to be a prison, a curious prison that she had power to leave and yet which was voluntarily a refuge. She spent the day in it, secure from interruption and yet tormented by her solitude.

It was curious, how remote seemed the personality that had caused all this misery, and yet how degradingly she felt herself linked with him. She remembered tones of his voice and little actions of him, that at the time she had thought rather pretty, with the pungent disgust with which one might remember repented sins. He had become an abomination unto her nostrils and the very ashes of his letter in the grate a hateful presence.

The thought of the letter naturally swung her back into the old channels. She felt, and certainly could adduce reason for so thinking, that Elena and Loring had both seen the letter that had been her undoing. Yet how could this be? If Loring had found it, surely no motive on earth could have tempted him to show it. And if Elena had found it, would even a girlish sense of duty have made her give it into Loring's hands? There was only one solution that seemed reasonable—that Elena had gone into the library and had seen enough to make her feel as she had shown she did feel, and that she had gone out of the room without touching the pages, leaving them lying as she had found them; that later Loring had gone in and seen them, and—

And what had he done with them? Had he burned the letter as she had burned its successor, or had he kept it? And was he searching for the man who wrote it, or was he wondering what it all meant and where his best course lay?

Perhaps he thought she loved Peyton and was trying to adjust himself to the new order, and would plan to give her her freedom. Her freedom! When all in life she craved was to feel his arms

close about her again in the old tenderness, and to know that he loved her, and to try to be more worthy of that love.

She had been considered, by her associates, one of the great unbedadged order of "Sulphites," and she found herself, not to her displeasure, a bromid of the first water. Love and home and wifehood, devoid of humor and striking back into the stone age when jokes were out of the question because cutting hieroglyphs in rock was a tedious process unfit to express spontaneity, she found these old-fashioned unfashionable things looming great on her horizon. But behind them spread the wings of the destroying angel.

About four o'clock that afternoon, the little telephone on her desk rang with a soft insistent tinkle. She had been alone all day. Elena had gone out, and there was certainly no one whom she cared to see. She was standing in her window when the summons came, wondering why New Yorkers preferred ugly yards and unproductive roofs.

She turned at the first sound, standing holding by the curtains as if she almost feared the insentient little instrument on her desk. And why should she not? There it stood, a little nickel and black instrument, a veritable miracle that made lies so hard and so easy. At any moment, any personality however distasteful could inflict itself upon her, any ill news could come to her, any unavoidable distress. She stood looking at the gaping leechlike mouth, hating its black supremacy.

And then the impatient bell tinkled again. Mechanically she moved toward the small three-cornered chair and put her hand on the trumpet. She drew a deep breath. In her present nervous condition of mind, she wondered what message was coming to her over that equable unfeeling wire.

"Are you there?" she said, taking down the transmitter wearily.

"May I speak to Mrs. Brinsmade?"

"This is Mrs. Brinsmade."

"Oh!"

There was an imperceptible pause. "Who is this?" she said.

"Don't you know?" inquired a voice softly.

"No, I don't," she said all the more harshly because she suddenly did.

"Didn't you get my letter this morning?"

"Yes," she said.

"I have been waiting half an hour. Can't you come?"

"Wait a minute," she replied.

She put her head over the instrument as if it could overhear her thoughts. She sat a moment staring at the wall. Then she moved her hand and said: "Where are you?"

"Where I said I would be. At the club."

"Said—when?"

"In my letter. Didn't you get it?"

"A letter came this morning," she answered dully.

"Yes—well?"

"I didn't read it."

"You didn't read it? Are you angry with me?"

There was a long silence after this. She was thinking of other things. As before, she put her hand on the black mouthpiece. Then the detached voice said in her ear: "Aren't you coming?"

She hesitated a moment. But there were things to be said that could not be said over the telephone. "I will be there in half an hour," she said. "I want to talk to you."

"Very well," said the voice. And she heard the metallic clink of disconnection.

She hung up the affair and rang for Babette. There was only one way to end it, and that was to see him and tell him that he must no longer write to her or think of her. She moved over toward her dressing-table and put her hands to her hair. It seemed an imposition that she should have to dress as carefully as if she cared to look well in his eyes.

"I am going out," she said to the maid. "Get me a street gown."

"A calling gown, madam?"

"No, the very plainest thing I have."

"The dark green?"

"Yes—anything."

Babette went away and presently re-

turned from the wardrobe-room with the suit over her arm. "Shall I order the carriage, madame?"

"No," said Mrs. Brinsmade. "I am only going a step."

She dressed herself languidly, and yet with a certain impatience. She hated the very thought of speaking to this man again.

If only he could be swept off the face of the earth so that she might never even hear of him. He had stolen all her happiness from her and she hated him.

She walked to the club in the same weary impatience. It infuriated her that the servant at the door should bow her in as if it was to be expected that she should come there to see this man. She went up the stairs into the deserted parlors in a mood that wavered between murderous viciousness and a sinking self-loathing.

Peyton was walking nervously about in the empty rooms. She saw him, moving away from her before he heard her coming, and she hated him again for the very excellence of his clothes. He was so very good to look at, and she wanted so much never to look at him again.

He heard the soft sound of her skirt as she came nearer, and turned with a sort of nervous jump to meet her. In an instant they were standing face to face, and he half put out his hand. But as her own did not meet it, he drew a difficult breath and put both hands into his pockets.

"What is the matter?" he said flatly.

"I would not have come at all except that I had things to say that I could not say over the telephone."

He squared his shoulders a little, looking down at her steadily in silence. Then, "Won't you sit down?" he asked courteously.

"I don't think so," she answered absently. "I wanted to tell you that all this sort of thing has got to stop."

"All this sort of thing," he said, "is rather ambiguous, but I won't pretend of course that I don't know what you mean."

"It ought to have ended long ago.

It ought never to have begun. I never cared for you in the least."

"Oh, yes, you did," he murmured.

"I didn't," she repeated.

"Well, you let me tell you that I cared for you," he put it quietly.

"I know. It is true. And I am very much ashamed of it."

He looked at her again in silence for a moment, and then he surprised her. "One of my letters went astray?" he said.

She flashed an amazed glance at him. "Have you seen Loring?"

"No," he said and almost smiled.

"Then how did you know that?"

"Because you have decided that it must end," he answered rather cruelly. "One is sorry when matters are found out."

"Whatever the means that have made me realize that it was wrong, at least I do understand now that it was."

"Forgive me," he said. "It was ungenerous. But—but you cut so deep."

She turned away from him and from the sudden unmasked expression of pain in his face. She had forgotten, or perhaps had never known, that rightly or wrongly he did care for her in all sincerity. She moved toward a fat satiny sofa and sat down on it. After a moment or two he joined her, and sat leaning forward, twisting his clasped hands. "Will you—will you tell me about it?"

"About what?"

"About the letter."

"Why?"

"I should like to know."

She turned her muff about on her knees. "I left it on the library-table, and when I came back for it it was gone."

He waited some moments and then glanced up. "Well?" he said.

"That is all."

"All? Has nothing been said? Why, you don't even know who took it, do you?"

"No. But that makes no difference."

"I suppose not," he assented. There was a long silence. "Of course you are right. It was wrong. I should not

have written you. I am not given to doing dishonorable things—but in this case I have. And I have made you unhappy. Can you—can you forgive me?"

"I am afraid not," she said. "I cannot forgive myself."

He looked at his twisting hands. "I suppose not," he said again.

After a moment he rose suddenly and walked the length of the room, passing his hands over his hair. When he came back to her he stopped.

"What are you going to do?"

"I don't know," she said simply.

"What do you want me to do?"

She did not even look up at him. "Can you go away?" she asked after a pause.

"I can do anything you want me to do. Do you want me to go away?"

"Yes," she said.

He stood silent, and then walked away again. She was aware he had returned to his place before her when he spoke. "For how long? When may I come back?"

She did not answer.

"Never?" he asked with a little catch in his breath.

She did not answer.

"Never," he repeated, but it was not a question now. "It—it will be very hard. This is my home, you know."

Her eyes lifted for one pitying instant, but he made a little gesture of refusal. "Oh, not that," he said. "I am not begging you to make my sentence lighter. When I said I could do anything you wanted me to, I meant it. I will go away, I will go away at once. And I will never come back." He did not sit down beside her again, but continued to stand before her. "It will be very long," he said. "I wish—I wish you could bring yourself to forgive me, now—or when you can, some day. It seems almost too much to bear, both of these things together."

"Oh, it's myself I can't forgive," she said, and the tears were in her eyes. "I have no right to hate you. I should have——"

"Please, don't," he said. "The fault

is mine, all mine. But you do understand, don't you, what I am paying and shall have to pay for it? I am not an old man and I may live a long time. And all those years I shall be an exile, you see."

"I have no right to ask such a sacrifice. Perhaps some day——"

"You have the right. Good God, see what I have brought down upon you! Of course you can't believe it, because I dragged you headlong into all this horror, but it is true, nevertheless, that I would give my life to save you the slightest little pain." He broke off with a short laugh, and again the catch of the breath. "I think I have heard something like that before," he said mirthlessly. "It is not a very original remark." He looked down at her, and she did not dare to meet the look of suffering that she knew was in his eyes. "Come back?" he said softly. "Come back, and know that somewhere I should see you and that you should see me? Never, although all the devils of homesickness and loneliness tore me to pieces."

"Oh, don't!" she said. "Oh, don't!"

"I beg your pardon."

He stood aside from her and made a little movement of obeisance. She got up unsteadily and stood staring at the door. In the mere reality of his love for her and his pain, she felt her own culpability heavier than before. Dishonorable as he may have been, at least he was going to pay the uttermost farthing. She opened her lips to speak and knew that he was watching her.

"Don't say it, please, unless you can mean it," he said.

"I can mean it," she answered. Her throat ached and it was very hard to speak. "I do forgive you."

"Thank you," he said.

They stood silent and motionless. And then she moved toward the door. At the threshold she turned and looked at him. "Will you also forgive me?" she said.

"I have nothing to forgive," he said. "I shall only have things—to remember."

CHAPTER VI.

It seemed to her that she was barely at home again before a letter from him was put into her hand. Her conversation with him had made her attitude toward him quite different. She no longer hated him, she was sorry for him. Yet he was a thing finished, like a book closed on the last page. She wondered somewhat at the letter as she held it unopened in her hand. Why should he have added one word to what they had said? Yet she trusted him now with a new trust, and was sure the letter was no boyish extravagance of renunciation and farewell.

Babette had brought her some tea, and she was lying in her chaise-longue just near enough the fire in the bedroom. Outside, it had begun to snow and the icy drops crackled on the panes. A soft light behind her had been lighted that she might see to read, but the magazine on her lap had not been looked at since she had asked for it. She felt cold and dispirited, and very much alone.

After a time she opened his letter. It was a mere line or two, enclosing another page.

When you are quite sure that he has read the letter in question, please give him this. I cannot, you see, before you are sure of that, take any open position with him. It may be selfish of me to ask you this, but I cannot bring myself to let him think that I have skulked away. Good-by.

The other page was lying open to her hand. It began in quite the same manner as that she had just read, without any formal address.

I have gone away because she asked me to. If for any reason you want me to come back my lawyer will send for me. I must tell you that she never wrote me a line in all her life or gave me any reason to suppose that she could ever care for me. This is not a lie.

That was all. The open sheets lay in her two hands and she stared at the window. It was a grisly epilogue. She had never thought of Peyton's attitude in the matter. When he had said he would go away, she thought selfishly enough that his present share in the sit-

uation at least was at an end. But it seemed a man could not do that. He cannot be a fugitive from justice. "If for any reason you want me to come back——" The sentence made her shudder. It was pregnant with rough masculine associations, the personal clashing of hatred, and all the desperate remedies to which men resort that are inevitable and forever futile. Where indeed had she been going in her blindness that such a situation could have grown up around her and because of her? She had done nothing, yet she had done everything, and by the mere passivity of her innocence of faulty action she had lost everything.

She had always loved Loring, in a gentle pretty way. But now there had been fused into her feeling for him a new element, a strange, starved wildness that terrified her. He had withdrawn himself to an immeasurable distance, and she could not reach him. Her hands groped for him and she called to him. But he did not answer. Was it always to be like this? The contemplation of living the rest of her life under such conditions turned her giddy. Peyton had called himself an exile. Good heavens, what was she? He was paying with his whole life—was she also to pay with all of hers?

The pages rustled in her hands as her fingers tightened. She felt an emotion in her that made her wonder if some other woman, some primeval barbaric creature, had not taken possession of her body. She had never known hours like these. She had never dreamed that she could feel it within herself to lie and steal, and kill if it were necessary, toward the winning of the man she loved.

She remembered Loring as he had sat the evening before in the library, poised so negligently on the arm of the chair and looking over his shoulder at her in the doorway with such aloof indifference. And something began to throb in her throat. She wanted to see the old quick look of welcome, the smile, the glad eyes, the outstretched arms, she wanted the touch of the caressing hands and of the tender lips that

murmured to her, even while he kissed her. She wanted him, she loved him, she would have him. She would win him back to her, cost what it may.

Vivified by a sudden color and a rush of tense vigor, she swung herself to her feet and went to her glass. She was beautiful—at any rate he thought her so, and that was enough. She would face him bravely, tell him the truth about the letter, and beg him to understand and forgive her and love her. Her beauty itself would plead for her. There was a special gown he liked——

Just as she moved, still in the nervous energy of this impulse, toward the bell to ring for her maid, there came a tap at the door.

"Yes—yes?" she cried, half stopping, half going on. "What is it?" Her voice sounded high in its exhilaration.

"If you please, Mrs. Brinsmade," said Henry's voice at the door.

She swerved aside from her path a step or two and opened the door. "What is it?" she said again.

"Mr. Brinsmade has just telephoned that he has been detained down-town and will not be home until late."

She felt the warm glow receding from her in as rapid a flood as had been its coming. From her finger-tips onward she seemed to grow chill.

"Very well," she said mechanically, and shut the door.

She turned back into the room, lifelessly. All the sense of power, of ability to bring back the past, slipped away leaving her disheartened and sick. Was it going to be like this always? Was she to be given no chance to make the thing plain? Did he never want to speak to her again?

She put out the electric lamp and curled herself up in her long chair, crushed down upon her pillows like a tearful child. If only she had been given the opportunity to talk with him then while the radiance of that inspiration was upon her, she knew he would have understood. He would have forgiven her—for, after all, she had done nothing very dreadful—and he would have knelt down beside her and put his

dear arms about her and his dear face near hers. But now he would not even come near her, and she was all alone.

How terribly wicked he must think her! He did not know that she had not written just such letters to Peyton, he did not know that she cared nothing for the man, that if he had been permitted to kiss her glove it was all he had been vouchsafed, and that his silly letters were his own fault. But he did know that the letter had come, and he knew it was not the first, and she knew as well as he that there should have been no second.

Curiously enough, she seemed to grow younger and more girlish in her misery, instead of older as is the case with most people. All the manner that society found so charming because it was the acme of its own manner seemed to leave her as if she had been playing a part all her life. She felt childish, too, and childishly lonely because of her isolation. As she buried her head in the cushions, much to the disarrangement of her waving hair, she might have been fifteen years old and in disgrace for staying away from school.

She had been through many and deeply varied emotions and griefs that day, and she felt very weary. The room was quite dark and still, and little by little a drowsiness stole over her, and she fell asleep. With her long pretty lashes lying so wistfully on her pure skin, and her hand tucked under her cheek, and her loosened hair rumpled in a mass about her forehead, curled up like a forlorn youngster before the fire, she looked a very different person from the impatient heart-sick woman who had gone to bid Peyton exile himself as a penance for his share in a miserable and unworthy flirtation.

She slept until she was awakened by her maid's entrance, and the announcement that it was dinner-time. The words brought back the whole rush of her disgrace upon her, and she remembered that Loring was not coming home. She rose wearily, asked if Elena was dining at home, and finding that she was, told the maid to get her a tea-gown and turn up the lights.

For all her refreshing sleep it was a pale face that looked at her out of the mirror. There was still the new childish look upon it, but it was the face of a child who is harassed and ill. She observed it with some commiseration. Another day or two of this sort of thing, she told herself, would kill her.

She locked Peyton's two scanty pages in her jewel-box, and went down to dinner because she must. She was quite fully resolved to speak to Loring when he came home. She would wait for him in the library and she would tell him the whole degrading, stupid truth. After that—well, after that she did not know.

Elena was in the dining-room when she entered, walking about. She carried her glass of sherry in her hand but had drunk none of it, and she smiled a faint smile at Rosa. "I am waiting for you, you see," she said.

"I am sorry to be late. I was fast asleep," said Mrs. Brinsmade. She smiled, too, a little, and seating herself took up her own glass. "Here's to a *bon voyage*," she said.

Elena took her place with a barely perceptible glance at Loring's, and Rosa felt again the old dull shock of the pain at her heart.

"Loring has been kept down-town on a matter of business," she said, feeling as people do who are constrained to speak of trivial matters at a funeral. "I shall sit up a while for him in the library, but if he is very late I shall slip off to bed. For I am very tired and stupid to-night."

She tried to speak lightly, and she wondered if the effort would have been apparent to a baby of six. She looked at Elena, but the girl was eating her grape-fruit and there was no answering look in return.

"What have you been doing to-day?" said Rosa, after a moment. The old terror of silence had come down upon her, and yet to sit there chatting of such things, keeping all the real and terrible things in the background, seemed likely to drive her mad.

Elena rehearsed her program, shop-

ping and being fitted, luncheon at the Fiero's, then a little bridge, and a charity musicale before tea.

"I saw you as we were coming from there," she added. "I was in the Shrivvers' machine. We waved to you, but you did not see us. You were coming out of that club on Sixtieth Street—what is it, the Metropolitan?"

"Yes," said Rosa.

There was a pause. She would have been glad to say something more, to explain or to invent, but she could think of nothing. She felt sure the silence was damning, but she could not meet the look. And the moment passed.

How many thousand people have cried out on the curse of uncertainty! Almost as many as have done the same for its antithesis. For nearly forty-eight hours now she had been tortured by this doubt: Did Elena know? Did Loring know? Did both know or neither? She knew how prone one was to read meaning into nothing when one is searching for the suspicious. But surely neither her husband nor this girl had ever behaved like this before, and the coincidence was rather too convincing.

It was a terrible dinner. Now and again one of them would make an effort to resurrect the dead conversation, and a few feeble galvanic movements would reward them. But its case was hopeless. It was too palpable, each to the other, that the situation was distressing. Elena kept her eyes for the most part on her plate, but her uncontrollable color rose and faded in a way that could leave no doubt as to her discomfort. Rosa, who found to her horror that much indeed of her carefully cultivated art of acting the part of a gracious though inwardly perturbed hostess seemed to have been slipping away from her in the hours of mental upheaval, wondered at her own lack of savoir faire, watched the situation get beyond all control, and relinquished all pretense of holding the reins. By the time their coffee was served they had lapsed into an absolute and uncomfortable silence.

"Bring the coffee into the library,

Henry," said Rosa, rising, and wishing it were permissible to scream. She moved away with a voluminous whirl of her skirt as if she felt the need of that impatient movement. "And bring me a cigarette. You must forgive my tantrums, Elena, but I am as nervous as a witch to-night."

"I wouldn't try to sit up for Loring, if I were you," said Elena, as they went into the library, and her telltale color deserted her completely. "You would be wiser to go to bed and relax. They say warm milk——"

"For heaven's sake!" cried Mrs. Brinsmade. "Don't go and get sensible, Elena. I couldn't endure it."

She laughed a little hysterically as they stood near together watching Henry arrange the coffee-service on a little table. Then the laugh died in her throat as the servant drew the tabouret over to the side of her own particular chair, her throne, the chair of honor that Loring no longer wanted her to sit in. She wondered what she could do. To sit somewhere else, after all that had been fantastically said and done about her occupancy of that particular place, would be to make a bad matter worse. Yet she felt a usurper as she sat down there, and only managed to keep the tears out of her eyes by attending very busily to the coffee.

Elena did not sit down, but continued to walk about in the room, and every time she passed the great desk she touched it with her hand. The talk between them had narrowed again to a mere "Here is your coffee" and a "Thank you," and they took refuge from one another in drinking its fragrance.

Mrs. Brinsmade lighted her cigarette. Elena had never seen her smoke before, and indeed Rosa did not care for it, but she felt a panicky need of having something to do. Through the various strains of the day she had passed into a weak uncertainty of herself, and rather dreaded what she might unaccountably say or do. She had been so sure of herself all her life that she scarcely knew how to face this new self, so much stronger than herself and

such a stranger, and she was actually trembling.

Then suddenly Elena drew herself up. "There is Loring now," she said.

Mrs. Brinsmade listened. There was indeed the unmistakable stir in the hallway that heralds the arrival of the man of the house. A door opened and closed, masculine footsteps sounded, and there was a deferential murmur of greeting from the servant.

"I thought he would be much later," she said.

Loring's voice speaking to the man in an unintelligible tone came nearer to the library door, and the end of the sentence, "Anything at all, and a brandy and soda. Bring it to me here," came to them. Then Loring appeared and stopped.

"I didn't know you were here," he said. His voice sounded tired. "Good evening."

"You are home earlier than I thought you would be. We would have waited dinner for you," said Rosa. She had only glanced at him and then turned to pour herself another cup of coffee. She would rather not have been sitting in that chair when he came in.

"I didn't want you to wait," he said. "Henry is going to bring me a bite." He looked at the cigarette she was holding, and then turned to the girl who was standing a little apart. "It's quite two days since I have seen you," he said, and for the first time in as great a space he smiled. "Rosa tells me the Shrivvers are going to carry you off."

"And the ridiculous child says she won't let us have the pleasure of giving her the trip," said Rosa.

"Oh, you mustn't do that," said he. He took a cigarette from the open box on the tabouret, and tapped it sharply on his thumb-nail while he looked at her. "This has been a devilish year, and I really must be allowed to get some fun out of it."

"I told you he wouldn't take 'no' for an answer," said Mrs. Brinsmade over her shoulder at the girl.

Elena smiled at him uncertainly as the flame of the match he had lighted

flickered before his face at the end of his cigarette. "I wish—" she said and hesitated. "Oh, I don't want to seem ungracious, but I wish you would let me say 'no.'"

"Can't be done," said Loring lightly. "I am about due to see something pleasant loom on the horizon and I hail this appearance with cheers. I am sure you will say 'yes'—to please me." He looked at her with a smile, but she was quite grave.

"I can't say 'no,' under those conditions," she said. "It would be very horrid of me to displease you after you have both—"

"Nonsense, Elena!" cried Rosa. She blew the faint smoke from her lips into the quiet air. "You are our creditor. You know quite well how much it has meant to us to have you here." There was almost a surcease of sorrow in these few moments. The three-cornered conversation was quite like old times. She could almost bring herself to forget the grim silences that had obtained when two of them were alone together. "You are so much better to me than I deserve," said Elena suddenly, and her voice broke on the words.

The tone of her voice was so unexpected, breaking in upon their unemotional talk with the sudden shock of deep feeling, that they both started and looked at her. She stood near his desk, that very table where the misfated letter had lain, and she put her slim fingers underneath the strand of pearls she wore about her neck and pressed them there as if something hurt her throat. There was a look on her face neither of them could interpret. But it was over in a moment, and she had smiled, and her hand had fallen from its eloquent position.

"Now I am going to my room," she said. "Truly I should think you would want to be rid of me for a time. I have been an interloper in your domestic bliss long enough. But I shall come back again, don't forget that."

She laughed girlishly as she said it, quite unconscious it would seem of how they two had received her light reference to their felicity.

The man servant came in at the moment with a small tray. Loring, it appeared, had forgotten that he had so ordered it, and certainly had quite outlived the desire for any food. "I'll just take the brandy and soda, Henry," he said. "You may carry the rest away again."

"Oh, do eat something," said Rosa, half impatiently. "Really going, Elena? Well, good night, my dear."

"Good night," said the girl pleasantly.

"Good night," echoed Loring. "No, Henry, I don't want it. Leave the decanter."

Elena, and, a moment after, the butler, went away and with them seemed to go all Rosa Brinsmade's sense of security. She flung away her burned-out cigarette, trembling again in the dreaded silence. Loring, somewhere behind her, mixed him his drink presumably and drank it.

She sat there nervously, fearing that he might speak to her and wishing with all her heart that he would. His mere presence in the room with her stimulated her helpless longing for his love and trust to an acute pain. She wanted to fling herself into his arms and sob the pain away on his heart, to implore him to give her back what she had once had, to compel him with the mere truth of her new and greater love for him to believe in her and in what she could tell him. There was nothing she would not do to win back that which she had lost. When the doubt assailed her most strongly that it was ever to be hers again, she was conscious of growing dizzy and feeling the floor sway under her. It seemed almost as if the thoughts in her mind must reach him in that silence. They were of such an appalling force and intensity that she could almost feel them bridge the distance between them.

Then—it seemed suddenly and yet as if she had been waiting for it for years—he spoke her name? He came slowly nearer to her and stood looking down at her. His face was quite calm, of its natural ruddiness, and the hand that held his cigarette was utterly steady.

"Rosa," he said.

She looked up. Her heart began to beat as if at every contraction it forced itself against a sharp spear. The muscles in her arms, do what she could, shook desperately.

"Do you want your freedom?" he inquired. His voice had no suggestion of any feeling in the matter. It was the quiet tone of a dispassionate inquiry.

"My freedom?" she echoed in a whisper.

"Yes," he said.

His eyes never left her face and no change came over him as he waited for her answer. But she was quite unnerved by the unexpected question, and her whole being shook like a slender plant in a gust of wind.

"Do you know whether you wish to be free or not?"

She made a voiceless movement of assent with her lips.

"You do know. Then, will you please tell me? Because if you do, if you can find greater happiness elsewhere, I will arrange it at once, of course."

"I do not." She barely managed to make the words heard.

He listened and then walked away again. "You do not wish to be free," he said slowly.

There was a long pause. She heard him unlock a drawer of his desk and then the sound of papers. She moistened her dry lips and tried to draw a long breath, but she could not. Then he came back to his position near her. In his hand was the letter.

"There is no need," he said impassively, "to go into any sort of detail about this letter. If you wish to continue our life together, you know of course what must be done about this."

He dropped the letter suddenly upon her lap. She instinctively drew her hands away from it, but a moment later she took it up and opened it. The familiar writing, the well-remembered words swam before her eyes. Something too terrible for any name had taken possession of her, seized her by the throat, and strangled her into submission to its vileness. She was not thinking, reasoning, or sane. She

merely felt a blind helplessness that in the face of such evidence her own innocence of great evil would never be believed. All other things were swept away from her in the hideous moment, except that the man she loved must return to her. The page with its sudden plunging into a confession of longing and adoration went into her consciousness like the drug that made Jekyll turn into the pathway of enormity.

"This is Elena's letter," she said.

Instantly the man changed. His face went white and his eyes raged with a fury. He caught her roughly by the shoulders, and dragged her to her feet. She felt suddenly as if they both had gone mad. This was not Loring, and it was not she. It was an insane delusion that she should feel his merciless hands bruising her flesh, and that she should be confronted with the fearful distortion of his face.

"Not Elena's!" he said, and his voice was choking in his throat. "Not Elena's! You are lying—you lie!"

She stared at him, unable to speak, almost it seemed to her unable to live.

"It is a lie," he cried again.

She saw the terrible pallor of his face glaring at her like a white light, and she felt a numbness as of death itself overcome her.

"Say it is a lie." He shook her as he held her, beside himself with agony. Her head swayed. Her body seemed to collapse, and to be held erect only by the tearing grip of his fingers.

"Say it is a lie," he shouted into her face.

"It is a lie," she said, and slipped from his grasp into her chair.

CHAPTER VII.

She was quite alone in the room when consciousness fully returned to her. She was not sure whether she had actually fainted or not. She had been away, that was all. The room had faded into a gray mist with great black gaps in it, and she had not thought anything or heard anything. And now she was still sitting in her

throne chair, and there was something that buzzed in her head and the sound of it nauseated her. She put her hands to her forehead and sat forward, leaning her elbows on the arms of the chair. Dull thoughts, like waking weary creatures, stirred in her mind and became stupidly conscious. She began to remember what had happened.

The first to wake was the giant that had destroyed her. She had "seen red," as the masculine phrase went, and she had lied. She had committed the unpardonable sin and had tried to shift her own stain to another. Though the mere vehemence of the elemental desire, so new to her carefully trained and protected personality, she had done the unforgivable thing. No need for her now to know that she was guiltless of many things. No comfort for her now to hug to herself the colorless virtue of having done nothing except to listen. She had besmirched herself beyond all cleansing, and her own hand had destroyed her. She could not remember having done it. She could see only his blazing white face as he roughly got the confession of her loathsomeness from her. She might have killed a friend and yet hope that he would pardon her and still love her. But in what she had done she knew there was no gleam of justification that could ever make her other than an abomination in his sight.

If only he could understand the mad upheaval that had crushed her down into the mud where she now lay. But that was impossible, unthinkable. She could not even begin to understand it herself, and yet no one but she could be expected to comprehend its fearful force. She had lived through those unspeakable moments herself, and yet she could not compass them in retrospect. The mere fact that she was beyond her depth in a sea of her own creation made any hope of rescue a torturous hallucination. "She would have to go down. At the moment itself she was drowning, or already dead—she did not know which—and her white face would float upon those waters beyond even the ultimate hope of burial.

What was it that had torn the truth from her lips and substituted the lie with which she had brought this degrading death upon herself? She had had the fixed intention of telling him. She had nothing harder to confess than that she had been a frivolous, unworthy fool. He might perhaps as years went by, and she proved to him the reality of her love for him, have forgiven her this, and she might slowly and painfully have won her way back to his side. But she had swept away the only chance she had, and had flung herself into the waves of an unpersuadable sea.

It must be true, she thought, "that last wild pageant of the accumulated past that clangs and flashes for a drowning man." She was going down, in the deep waters, and the clamor of remembrance was in her ears.

Distinctly she remembered the day of her betrothal. She had been tremulously happy, but the joy had been more introspective than unselfish. She was to be married.

She was to be surrounded with fluttering interest. There were to be rapturous plans of a wedding, and frocks, and flowers, and in all the arrangements, which were not new to her, she was to be the central figure instead of one of the attendant satellites. Boxes bearing mysterious gifts would be delivered at her door. She it would be who would lead envious girl friends into the room set apart for that display, and when the appreciation of the silver service or the cries of admiration elicited by the string of pearls reached her ears, she would be the possessor of these riches instead of one of the onlookers. Of course she loved Loring Brinsmade. That was not very hard to do. His good breeding, his excellent appearance, his devotion to her, his popularity among both men and women, his social and financial position—all these things were for him, and there was nothing against him.

Then when at last all the fever of preparation culminated in the furor of the wedding-day, everything had been perfect and successful. She saw herself again at the door of the church, she felt

the twitching of her train, as nervous hands arranged it to the best advantage, she heard the thick pulsating tone of the organ and the sweet high voices of the choir, she could even smell the pungent aroma of the white lilacs that brought a winter spring into the building.

Then there was the scene at her home again—the masses of smiling faces, the babble of voices, the crisp tingle of the champagne on her lips, her mother's half-tears, her father's hoarse jocularity, the confusion of farewell, the shower of rose-leaves, and the ultimate departure from all the noise and mob with the blow of an old shoe striking the back of the limousine in a last expression of good-will.

Then more clearly than all the rest, that strange moment of silence between herself and Loring, when she found that he was sitting leaning forward with the end of her scarf against his lips. She was married. She was rather sorry it was all over. She was flushed and smiling, and felt like "talking it over." And he was as silent and motionless as if he were kneeling at the altar-rail to take communion.

Then there were myriad glimpses of the honeymoon—their first dinner as man and wife. Oh, he had been bright and gay enough then. She could see him as he sat watching the waiter with a half-comical suspense to see him close the door that he might fling down his napkin and come around the table again to kiss her.

There was the trip South, and the embarrassment of being observed by smiling black faces in the dining-car. There were the long days when golfing and bathing and motoring and sweet-heating had made the young blood dance in their veins, and filled the earth with gladness. There was the return to the city and the way he had held her hand as they drove to their home—their home! He had, as the door of it opened to them with the placidity that might have made it seem the only home they had ever known, picked her up suddenly in his two arms, and in absolute disregard of the amazed eyes

of the butler, carried her across the threshold laughing and holding her close. No ill luck should come to this bride while he could draw the breath of life! The remembrance turned her cold.

How in the name of God had she been led, through the months and years that she had lived in the secure happiness of that home, to grow away from the best of life instead of toward it? The vehemence of her wonder and despair brought her to her feet, flinging out her arms. Was she a bad woman? Was she shallow and worthless? For if she was, could she now be suffering so deeply? And if she was not, how could she have done what she had?

She began walking up and down the room in the old way, with her fingers pressing against her temples under her waving hair. The scene through which she had so recently passed came before her from its incipience. Loring had spoken quietly and sanely and generously. He had given her the opportunity she wanted to tell him the truth, and in that moment she had lied to him. She had felt the earth shake beneath her, and she had gone mad.

Elena's letter! She almost brushed her hand across her mouth to wipe the words away. Elena's letter! What matter if there had been no harm in the letter from an unmarried man to an unmarried woman? Her lie was just as vile. And he had known instantly it was a lie. She must have told it rather badly!

Of course Elena was not the sort of woman whose love-affair would have been permitted to go secretly so far as the letter presumed. Yet girls did have their secrets, and Elena had been pale and strange of late. How could she think of such trivial things?

Here she stood in the ruins of her life conjecturing the reasons of his having disbelieved in her lie when she had all the future before her to stare at, heart-sick and dismayed. She wondered at herself, impersonally. Often she had read that human minds worked incomprehensibly, that even the criminal in the dock being sentenced to

death by hanging would notice a strange crack in the wall and find a resemblance in it to some foreign thing. Her thoughts were quite as uncontrollable and inopportune, and she pressed her fingers more harshly against her temples as if by so doing she could determine her mind's direction. But the stunned brain only repeated that Elena had been pale and strange of late.

With her arms in this position she could feel the stiff pain in her shoulders, where Loring's hands had gripped her. He had been beside himself with rage. How curious it was that one could live with a man for years and never know of what he was capable. Repression was a strange modernity. Had she been a cave-woman and he her mate, she would have witnessed this elemental brutality a thousand times. He would have given it free rein in any variety of provocation. She might have seen him beating a wild beast to death that they might placidly divert his succulent bones into provender for the family. Yet it was a grim thought that this ungovernable fury dwelt always in a man, down deep and perhaps never to be in all his life called to the surface, but there, there, ready at the instigation of a primitive emotion to boil upward.

She wondered, as the murderer wonders at the mark on the wall, if the cave-woman would have lied. Perhaps that accomplishment came along with the repression. And yet she was aware that if she had not been hurled from her own self-control she would have told him the truth. She did not excuse herself in that the impulse and the action had been stronger than her reason and her desire. She had done it. She had said the lying words.

And he had dragged her to her feet, and his accusation and his white manicled face were blended in her mind into one piercing sword of flame that had entered her heart's life. How his quiet eyes had opened and blazed at her. "Not Elena! Say it is a lie!"

And Elena had been pale and strange of late.

It is impossible to say whether the

thought came then or later. She leaned against the table and her hand flew to her throat in unconscious imitation of the girl's attitude those long hours gone by. What cell in her brain had released the recurrent phrase at just that instant, who could say? It came and it rang in her ears.

"Not Elena! Say it is a lie!" And Elena had been pale and strange of late.

CHAPTER VIII.

It was almost as if she had become unconscious again. The thick horror of the thought wrapped itself about her like an impenetrable coma. She stood, one hand on the desk, one at her throat, motionless, lifeless, yet in agony. The pain seemed no part of her. It seemed there was no Rosa Brinsmade. There was only a new terrible thought for personality, and an ether of suffering for universe.

Then things again came back to her. She was in the library, alone. The soft lights were burning, the coffee-service was spread on the little table, Loring's glass and decanter stood on the desk. She was alive. And she wished she were dead.

She moved over to the other end of the table supporting herself at every step with her hand upon its stanch strength, and she gathered her force to pour a little brandy into the glass. She drank it impersonally as one might give medicine to a sick person. It burned her throat, but that did not seem to matter. She went over to her chair again and rather fell into it than took her seat there.

How absorbed she had been in herself that she had not a glance or a thought to bestow on others. She had so grown to accept the love Loring had always given her that it had not seemed to her he could ever change. She had forgotten that changes insist upon coming when they will, and that if the garison be asleep there is no occasion for any noise of entrance.

Elena and Loring had been under the same roof for months, had seen one an-

other every day, and had liked one another from the very first. It was ten years since Loring had married her, and in ten years, so other peoples' lives attested, many changes were possible. They had not in any sense drifted apart, he and she, yet it was true that for months they had not been as essential to one another as in the first years of their married life. If Loring had found himself caring more for Elena than he had any right to do, he was not to blame for that. A love that can be argued out of existence would not be the kind of love such a man could feel.

And Elena was not to blame. Above and beyond all the straightforward purity of the girl's nature, she was of a childish inexperience, and would not probably have understood that she loved Loring until it was too late to retrace her blind steps.

That the matter so existed she saw plainly. That there it had ended she absolutely knew. But it explained so many things! Elena's strangeness, her paleness, her vivid and uncontrollable flushes of color under scrutiny, her avoidance of Rosa, her inability to speak naturally to either her husband or herself, her wish to go away, her unwillingness to take the trip from them as a gift, the very break in her voice when she had said: "You are so much better to me than I deserve"—all these things fitted into their places with convincing aptness.

"Do you want your freedom?" Loring's words came back to her. How quietly, how unfeelingly, how judiciously he had spoken them. He had stood beside her, suggesting their eternal separation, with the voice of a man who speaks of alien things. But when in her mental delirium she had lied to him, had given him to understand that Elena was the recipient of this unrebuffed declaration of passion from Miles Peyton, he had burst into a white rage. He had forgotten her and her womanhood, himself and his greater strength, and had seemed to feel that she herself was the incarnate lie against the girl, and could have strangled her.

It was very plain, too utterly reada-

ble. Elena, on her side, had decided that she must go away. Loring had retired into the grim necessity of not going away. It drove the nails of her fingers into her soft palms, to think that perhaps, when he had found the letter he had felt a thrill of hope, of hope that she, too, could have come to love some one else, and would take gladly from him the freedom he would so gladly give her.

Had she not become so engulfed in her new love for him, a new love as hopeless and as strong as death, she could have wished with all her soul that this was true. For it was she now who must go to him with the question he had put to her, and she shuddered at the thought that he may have hoped she would reply in the affirmative and might perhaps desperately do so in his turn.

She was conscious of no feeling in the contemplation of his caring for Elena and Elena loving him, except the conviction that if this were true they should have their life together. If he had made the old mistake in marrying her, certainly he should not pay for it harshly. A blunder made in good faith was surely not sufficient grounds for a lifetime of unhappiness. If he loved Elena, he should be freed at the earliest moment.

But the thought that did assail her, and which she could not combat with the weapons of fairness and philosophy, was the contemplation of the remainder of her own years, widowed and lonely. She loved Loring—it seemed to her that she had never loved him before in all her life. It had required the culmination of her own folly to bring her to her senses and to force the realization of her real self upon her.

She had never understood or known herself until now. A week ago she would have flouted the idea that she was not thoroughly cognizant of every twist of the corridor that led along through the rooms of her soul. But she had suddenly discovered a secret door in the paneling, and had gone through a narrow passage to find herself in an apartment that she had never known was there. Yet she would have to live

in that room all her life, she knew that. If she could feel herself to be shallow and worthless, could know that this agony was only temporary, and that she could emerge from it in a short space as inconsequent and light-winged as a butterfly from a cocoon, she would have despised herself and she would have rejoiced selfishly.

For she did not love sorrow and despair. Her natural heritage was "a fluttering up to joy," and almost she could resent the yoke of unshakable desire that had been laid upon her. Almost she could wish herself light of heart and soul and body, that she might escape the years of dull ache that she saw before her. She had been considered frivolous, she had been frivolous, and she could find it in her heart to wish that she could still be frivolous.

And yet—we are fearfully and wonderfully made—she hugged her new pain close to her as "those lonely antagonists of Destiny who go down scornful before many spears." She was irrationally glad of the pain that she felt. Sometimes she had wondered if she was as other folk, because she had never felt these deep primeval things, which are the star-stuff of which God built the earth, the sea, and all that in them is. She was glad to suffer. It might be that she looked forward to a life barren of all joy, of achievement, of all save hopelessness, but at last she was alive. She knew, and that was the main thing. She would rather love Loring and never see him again, feeding on the strange sweetbread and wine that pass the lips unworthy so much as to gather up the crumbs from the Master's table, than to live near him in the dull apathy of ignorance of the poignancy of life.

It had come late, too late, but it had come. She remembered the days of her struggle, her girlish struggle, to please her mother in churchly ways. She had felt all the new century's doubt poisoning her veins, and had not known that she was but an individual in the great army that is slowly, tortuously marching toward the truth.

Again she saw herself, a schoolgirl

with a ribbon in her hair, sent down to the study to talk over her confirmation with the rector of her mother's church. He was a pale thin man with the face of an ascetic, a man who lived in a dream and who talked to men from the standpoint of the prize-fighter, striking from the shoulder, a man who had his habitation among interstellar clouds, yet was constantly breaking down from overwork, practical work among the deserving and undeserving poor; a man who was a prey to a physical, mental and spiritual weakness and yet was commanding the respect and help and adoration of all his associates; a human being leading the life of a saint, a soldier, a sick man, and a sinner all in one, and very near to the heart of the almighty God.

She had stood before him, puerile and yet of a forcible determination, young and yet comprehending the antiquity of her difficulty.

She remembered how he had asked her as if she could rehearse the articles of her faith and she had said flatly that she could not.

"I have read them and they don't mean much to me," she had said. "Some of them I understand and hate, some I do not understand, and some I understand and believe."

"What do you believe?"

The question had hung in the air between them for some moments before she had answered. Then she had looked into his wan face above her, into the steady fire of those wistful eyes.

"I believe that there is something above me which I do not understand," she had said.

The face of the man had looked at her a long while silently, then the sweetness of a smile that might almost have illumined the features of the Man of Nazareth had shone upon her.

"After all, no one can say more," he had said, and on that understanding she had been taken into the church.

Now she could say more. She felt more. She knew more. If she had been trying to read a book in a dark room, and some one had made a light

for her, the page could not have become more suddenly clear. It was love that had done this thing.

The past slipped utterly from her. The vain old purposeless pursuits faded into the obscurity of a merciful mist. The life she had led, of teas and calls and dinners and balls, receded to an immeasurable distance. The vague, unnecessary people on whom she had wasted so much of the precious years of her youth retired into oblivion and disappeared. She saw herself on the face of the green earth, allotted a few years as a farmer may be allotted an acre of ground, to show what can be done with it. There was no one beside except Loring, and there stretched the years ahead of them in which to till the soil and reap harvests to the glory of God. It was love that had done this thing.

Yet now she saw that she had forfeited the tenure of that land. She was to be dispossessed, an unworthy servant. Out of the house of life was she to be sent, with all her new understanding upon her of what the privilege meant to live there, out into the wilderness, to sit upon a stone by the roadside and meditate upon her madness until death released her.

She saw what might have been hers, had she not vainly, madly flung it from her.

And she had lost all this. She had gone serenely and selfishly along her narrow little pathway, a path not lined with green sweet fields and woods and patches of fragrant clover set about with homes, but a way of rigid conventions, and tiresome obligations, gorgeous residences and smart equipages, bridge and dinners, teas and dances. She had wandered about among these things thinking she was alive. And all the time her fingers had loosened their hold upon the silken string that might have helped her to find her way back again, until she had actually dropped it.

And if another hand, younger than her own, had falteringly picked it up, and wonderingly had followed its guidance until the labyrinth had been

threaded and forsaken, was that anything but natural? She had abandoned it, she had no right to claim a title to it. It was love that had done this thing.

Love had done for her what it had, love had done for others what it had. No more were they accountable for that love that had come to them than she was able to understand out of what blankness the vision had come to her. But the apparition, as she saw it, bore a face of reproach, of immeasurable sadness, of patient renunciation. She had had everything to give it and she had given it nothing.

It was no excuse that she had given it all she knew she had. She should have searched for more. She should have dug mines in the earth to find new gold to shower into its outstretched hands, she should have circled the globe to discover new countries of which to make it master. She had opened her door to it, it was true, but she had fancied that enough, that it could take care of itself, and she had left it to starve to death just inside the threshold. If some one had found it lying there, its feeble pulse almost ended, and had carried it forth to succor it and nurse it back to a new life and strength, she could bring forward no claim that it should return to her roof.

No, she had failed. She had been passive and self-satisfied and vain. She had regarded love as a servitor, to wait upon her and to be her slave, and not as the honored guest whose sandals she was not worthy to unlace. She had been offered everything and had not even stretched out her hands to receive the immeasurable gift. It could be laid at her feet. She had not foreseen that love could do otherwise. But now the gift had passed on, and she could not stay it going. She had been asleep and had not heard the departing foot-falls. And had she any right to deny it a refuge under another roof-tree because her door had been inhospitable?

Yet, oh, God, to see it go away! To wake to a new understanding and consciousness of all it meant to her, and to be unable in all justice to so much

as implore its return! Indeed the mills do grind exceeding small. She had not known her soul lay between those two inexorable stones until she saw the dust in which it lay about her feet.

The price of her folly was demanded of her and she must pay! She had never known before what her gold had been. And now every uttermost coin of it must be paid out into that outstretched undeniable hand, and she must färe forth out from the house of life to starve upon the highway. She could not even beg. A beggar, stripped of all possessions, she must be driven forth, to die in the night, slowly and of her own weakness, beneath the stars that had done their uttermost to warn her, beneath the sky that she had never understood till now.

CHAPTER IX.

It was long past midnight when she went up to Elena's room. Never had she felt so old as she did in climbing these stairs. Her hand on the balustrade gripped for support and helped to drag her upward. She paused at the top of the steps, and with her hand against her heart drew a deep difficult breath. There was no ray of light from under Elena's door, and everything was very still. She made no sound herself as she walked down the hall and stood there, until lightly she rapped on the panel. There was a stir within, and then silence.

She waited an instant and then knocked again. "Yes—what is it?" said Elena's voice.

Rosa tried to answer, but could not. She heard the girl move again and jump out of bed. There was a sharp click of the electric push-button and then a swishing of silk. A moment later and the door opened.

Elena had been crying again; one could see that even as she stood with her back to the light. But with her abundant hair falling about her shoulders, in reckless disregard of the precepts of her coiffeur, her rose-red gown opening over the filmy freshness of her night-dress, she was warmly beautiful.

Rosa was conscious that she stood looking at her in a new way.

"What is the matter?" said Elena, half sharply and half in bewilderment.

"I want to come in," said Rosa drearily.

The girl stood aside from the doorway, staring at her. Mrs. Brinsmade came into the room, and crossed it wearily, and dropped into the same chair she had occupied on the previous day. She leaned back in it, and wearily closed her eyes, while her hands hung inertly from the arms of the chair. Elena stood by the door a moment, still staring, then she closed it and came to stand in front of Rosa.

"Are you ill?" she said concernedly.

The woman did not answer.

"Are you ill, dear?" repeated the girl.

"Oh, oh, no." Rosa moved her head in negation as it lay back upon the cushions of the chair.

"Then what has happened?"

"Everything—I don't know what. I came up to talk to you. I don't know what it is that I want to say to you."

Her eyes still open wide in wonderment, the girl knelt down at her knee and gently touched the hand that hung nearest her.

"Your fingers are like ice," she said.

"I think, after all, you are ill. Where is Loring?"

"I don't know," said the woman slowly.

"Gone out?"

"I think so." She seemed to speak with the greatest difficulty.

"I am going down to get you some of that brandy," said Elena.

"No, don't. I don't want it."

"That makes no difference. You are almost fainting," Elena got to her feet, and drawing the cords of her gown about her hurried out. She ran down the stairs, her bare feet making no sound. The study door was open, the light was burning, and the decanter stood on the table. Where could Loring have gone, and what could be the matter? Her hand trembled with her haste as she poured some cognac into the glass, and some water.

There seemed to be an atmosphere of tragedy in the room all about her. Something terrible must have happened—she could feel the echoes of it throbbing in the air. Perhaps Loring had lost his fortune—many men had gone to the wall in these troublous times. He had been away from the house until late in the evening and had come in strangely—yet she remembered his quiet, smiling insistence that she take from him the money for her trip. Would he have done that if—

She hurried out again and up the stairs. Breathless, she reached her own open door and found Rosa sitting or lying in the same position in which she had left her. The woman was terribly pale, even her lips were white, and Elena had a fear as she crossed the threshold that she had finally fainted during her absence.

"Rosa," she said. She knelt again beside the chair and slipped her hand behind the inert head. "Rosa, dear. Please drink this."

There was a faint effort of volition on the woman's part, and Elena lifted her head higher. Rosa drank a little, without opening her eyes. As she made a slight movement of distaste, Elena took the glass away, and letting her head sink back again upon the cushions, sat down on her heels, still holding the glass, and looked at her.

She had admired and loved this cousin of hers, but always through the mist of dainty luxury and ultimate perfection that surrounded her. As a matter of fact she really knew little of her fundamental nature. If her conjecture were true, if Loring had gone to the wall indeed, how was she going to bear herself—this woman? Bravely or no? She sat looking at Rosa a little while, and then raising herself again, begged her to take some more of the brandy.

"It is almost all water, but it will pull you together," she said gently.

Obediently the woman drank it, and then after a moment or two opened her eyes. Elena met the look with a half-smile.

"That's better," she said. "I was really afraid you were going to faint

away." She took one of the lifeless hands and rubbed it between her own warm young palms. "Is it very late? I was quite startled when you rapped at the door, but I am very glad you came straight to me. Whatever is the matter, I am glad that you want to share it with me. Do tell me, when you can, what has happened. I wish it was something in which I could help you, is it?"

"I hardly know," said Mrs. Brinsmade slowly, "how much I want to tell you of what has happened."

Elena had put the glass down, and now sank into a sitting posture on the floor at Rosa's feet. She shook her hair back and clasped her hands about her knees.

"I really think," she said, "that perhaps it would do you good to tell me all that has happened. I don't care to know what that is unless you care to tell me. But if for no other purpose, it might serve to clear the matter up in your own mind. I have found out that the best way to find out what you do mean, when you hardly know, is to try to explain your position to some one else."

Rosa was silent quite a long time. "Well, I will tell you," she said. "Miles Peyton——"

"Oh!"

Rosa opened her eyes at the exclamation. She saw the girl's flush rise.

"I was afraid he would have something to do with it sooner or later," said the girl in explanation. "I am afraid he has made you unhappy."

Mrs. Brinsmade shook her head wearily. "No, I have made myself unhappy," she said. "He is not half so much to blame as I am. You see, he has been writing to me while he was away."

Elena's hands tightened on one another, and her heart began to beat hard against her knee as she sat in her cramped position.

"And Loring found one of his letters," went on the woman in a dull voice.

The girl stared up at her. The com-

monplace horror of the vulgar situation sickened her. Rosa remained silent again, her thoughts drifting on into the fearful fog of the future. What was she going to do without Loring, without his strength to lean upon?

Suddenly Elena leaned nearer to her and the pressure of the girl's body against her knee opened Rosa's eyes again. Their two faces, white and strained, confronted one another, as a face might stare at its reflection and be stared at in return.

"Do you love him?" whispered Elena.

"Love him," repeated the woman with a sob. "I never knew what love was till now."

The girl's head drooped, and she crossed her arms upon her knees and laid her forehead upon them. Life was a very dreadful thing. The misunderstanding between them was improbable, impossible, yet there it was. Elena had spoken of Peyton, and Rosa whose mind had gone on with its thoughts of Loring had answered of her husband. They sat in absolute silence for a long time.

Then Rosa said, speaking again with that difficulty of stiff lips: "That is not all."

"No, no, of course not," murmured Elena. "Go on."

"I found that the letter was gone and I knew he must have taken it. And I waited for a chance to speak to him, to tell him the truth bad as it was, and see if there was not another chance for me to win happiness in this world. Yet—how can you explain this, Elena?—when my chance came, the chance I had so longed for, instead of telling him the truth, I told him a lie."

"Fear," said the girl. "One can't always face a colossal issue. You were afraid."

"Perhaps I was. I don't know. I hardly remember what happened."

"What was the lie?"

"I said it was yours."

"The letter?"

"Yes."

Elena lifted her head and stared at the wall. "I am sorry you did that,"

she said. Her eyes seemed to ache as if she had been staring at conflicting lights. "Of course I will bear you out. I suppose that is what you wanted to tell me about. I will say the letter is mine."

"No, no," said Rosa Brinsmade slowly. "I have not finished yet. I told him I had lied."

The girl's eyes melted with pity. "Oh, you poor thing!" she said softly. "Don't pity me. Don't have any touch of compassion for me. I don't deserve it," said the woman angrily. "I have been vile and despicable, and I tried to shift my punishment to your shoulders."

For answer the girl touched the hand softly. "You are suffering so much," she said tenderly. "I cannot help but be sorry for you."

"I didn't even admit that horror of my own free will," said Rosa, drawing her hand away as if she could not bear to feel the compassionate touch and know herself unworthy of it. "He made me say it. He knew I was lying."

Elena caught her breath and the tears rose in her eyes. What it meant to her, that little phrase, no one could have known. Loring believed in her, he believed in her. It was very sweet to her that he should, for she admired him.

"I have been despicable through the whole affair, and I ought to suffer all that I am suffering—yet I don't see how I am going to bear it," moaned Rosa. Her voice had the tone of the beat of a broken heart.

Elena drew herself back from her own exultation. "You are not despicable now, my dear," she said gently. "You are telling me the truth of your own free will, at a dreadful price. Are you not?"

"I am," said Rosa brokenly.

"Yet the price is not the losing of me, because, my dear, dear girl, you can't do that." She took the hand again and held it firmly and kissed it. "I love you, Rosa, and I am not the sort who sit in judgment upon other folk. I am very, very sorry you told

the lie, but that is only because it was a false move, and will make you very unhappy always to remember it. It entails no suffering for me, though I would have taken that upon me even if it had. He did not believe it, and you and I know it was not so. And so it is banished."

Rosa sobbed, but there were no tears in her eyes as there were in Elena's. The girl kissed her hand again and pressed it to her cheek. Then she released it and clasped her knees again, and a frown of misery came between her brows.

"What are you going to do?" she asked at last softly.

"Is there anything to do but one thing?" said the woman desperately. "Love is not a power to be denied. There are ways in which we can be free of one another. And I shall talk it over with him; and we shall arrange somehow. I am not thinking of myself any longer. All my life I have thought of nothing but myself. But I have been born all over again, now that I have come to learn what love really is, and his happiness is all that I have in my mind."

Elena stared at her. The words, "But what of Loring?" died on her lips.

Rosa suddenly straightened in her chair and laid her hand upon the girl's shoulder. "I am going to see you tucked up in bed again," she said, with a broken-hearted smile. "You poor little child, you are not half old enough to be part and parcel of any such sad affair as this of ours. But you will go away, and when you come back everything will be set aright and everything will be new and different."

Elena rose and helped her to her feet. "Let me go down with you to your room," she said. "You are the one to be cared for, not I. Let me tuck you up in bed, and I shall rest far more comfortably for knowing that you are there."

Rosa shook her head. "No," she said. "I will see you safe on the road to dreamland and I will put out your light."

She drew the girl to the bedside and

took the rose-red gown from her. Elena, docile but unsatisfied, slipped between the sheets and drew the covers around her.

"I wish you would let me take care of you, instead," she demurred.

Mrs. Brinsmade looked down at her. "How lovely your hair is," she said absently. Then she smiled again in the forlorn, heartless way. "Good night, dear girl. It is all for the best, perhaps." She moved away and put her finger on the electric-light button. "If this had not happened, probably I should never have known." The room snapped into darkness.

"Known what?" said Elena doubtfully.

There was a silence. Then suddenly she heard the woman recross the room, and felt her kneeling at her bedside. Rosa put an arm across her as she lay there, and one hand closed upon her shoulder.

"Known that you love him," she whispered. "Oh, Elena, you do truly, truly?"

A great chill passed over the girl in her horrified surprise and she lay silent.

"I know I have no right to ask," said Rosa, still in a whisper, as if one could not speak aloud in the darkness. "But for love of me, for love of him, for the sake of the future, for your own sake tell me the truth."

Her reasons had no weight in them for the girl. Indeed she scarcely heard them, certainly she did not consider them.

"Tell me," said Rosa. "Tell me that you do."

"I do," said Elena rigidly, and the beating of her heart shook her body.

CHAPTER X.

She went down into her room after that, and closing the door turned off the lights. A faint radiance from her dressing-room made the place light enough after a little, and she began the old pacing to and fro. This then was true. Loring loved Elena, and Elena loved Loring. She had scarcely believed it even when she had been so

pitifully sure of its verity. But the beating of the girl's heart when that final declaration was demanded of her in the darkness had shaken more than her own girlish frame. Like Samson, it had put its strength to the pillars of the temple; and like his antagonists, Rosa had died beneath the weight of the ruins.

There were ways. She wished, with all the sincerity of her new heart and her new understanding of hearts, that the simplest way of all might have been vouchsafed. She had nothing left to live for except Loring, and since that had been taken away from her she would have been glad to see her life end then and there.

Elena could have married him in decorous course of time, and there need never have been any question of lawyers and dusty courts and stupid papers, and all that. Her ideas of divorce were very vague, but she felt no repugnance to the isolation she knew must be hers in some Heaven-forgotten town in a barren wilderness, because it did not matter now where she went or what became of her. If by living in the desert for a year she could give Loring and Elena the privilege of coming together in all happiness at last, that was very little for her to do. She loved him and she loved Elena, and that was why she felt that death was far preferable to the law, since it was far less liable to delay and misinterpretation.

But since death was out of the question, she would do the next thing. She would go, alone except for Babette to care for her, into an unknown country, and there she would abide that the ingenious mind of man might be satisfied. That was all there was to it.

What would be her portion afterward she neither knew nor cared. Fate had offered her everything, and she had seen fit not to comprehend. The fault was hers and the penalty, and if the expiation was difficult and the future impossible, at least she would be thoroughbred enough to remember always that it was her own doing and to bear her torture without a craven whimper.

She found herself wondering, as she walked the length of her room turning and coming back, turning and coming back, what reminiscent moments would fill that shadow life of theirs. Would he sit forward silent in the carriage that bore them away from everybody to be alone, holding her scarf against her lips? Would he wait for the servant to quit the room that he might circle the table to kiss her? Would there be a chair in his study that was hers alone, her throne, where no one might sit save only Elena, and would he carry her across the threshold of that home in which her throne would hold sway?

Perhaps it would be this very home—no, not that! For neither of them could bear the old associations. No, it would be sold, and everything in it, and they would begin anew, in new walls, among new surroundings, and she would be like a sum in arithmetic that is wiped from a child's slate, undeniable but forgotten.

She must have one last talk with Loring, ask him to consult his lawyer, and advise her as to the course he wished her to pursue. And then it only remained for her to go to whatever corner of the land they saw fit, and begin that evading of human law which most resembles a compliance with divine equity.

It was all over. She had the facts in her hands. Any taste of hope that she might have had—the waters of that spring were still salt in the mouth—had left her. It was settled. She had seen in Loring's white, rage-distorted face that he loved Elena. She had it from the girl's own lips that she loved Loring. And there was an end to it.

Yet still she continued to pace her room restlessly. There was an end of it for them, but for her there would never be an end of it until she drew her last breath and was laid in a narrow hole made in the earth. She would have to live on and on, through years of hideousness, until God took pity on her and killed her. Perhaps fifty years would be the span of her punishment. If only she could be given something to do, with which to make the years

pass more sanely. But there was nothing. There was nothing before her but solitary confinement and empty hands, and madness only could spare her.

The most terrific suffering of human souls was the only hope she had. If only she would go mad, and so forget the reality of her pain. Once she had seen a poor creature at the barred window of that most eloquent of all asylums, in the waters of dear, beautiful, placid Venice, and had, as she heard the meaningless screams borne across the Guidecca to her as she lay in her gondola, pitied the dreadful hag, and suffered a horrible pang at the sight of that white face singing and laughing its maudlin misery in sight of all the healing glory of the City in the Sea.

But now she felt a certain envy. The pitiable lunatic might still be there, alive and croaking, with her eyes on the lateen sails and the gilded façades of palaces, but at least she knew nothing, could remember nothing, of the bitterness of life. She—Rosa Brinsmade—would have to go on through all her years, loving too late a man she had taught to despise her, forever widowed and childless, and forever knowing that she was the murderess of her own life.

What rebellion there was in her heart was passive. Why had she been taught so late? Why was the bandage to be removed from her eyes only after she had been shot? It did not matter. As she had said to herself earlier in that century, which to some happy people had been but an hour and to some more precise minds an evening, at least she understood. It was something to know what love is, even if it could not be hers in the way she so dawningly wished it. It was something to be brought out of the darkness, even if the light were the refulgence of death.

Later, as she was still unconsciously pacing to and fro in her dim room, she heard Loring come in. She heard his footfall on the stairs and in the corridor past her door, and at every step she felt her heart to be under his feet, and knew that he would never be aware it lay there. She could even—and there could have been no more sordid accent

laid upon her agony—hear him moving about his bedroom, and could picture him in all his stalwart beauty as he stood in his belted slenderness, coatless, before his mirror.

She felt her heart throb in her ears, and pressed her hands over her eyes as if she had been detected in some wanton pilfering. He was no longer hers. She had no more right to the pain she endured than she had to the love she bore him. She was an exile—

The word brought her up with a shuddering. In the lightning passage of the mind she had remembered the letter to him now lying in her jewel-case. Hardly cognizant of what she did, she called to him. Even here she had no rights. What had been entrusted to her to deliver she must deliver. What lay between one man and another was theirs, and though her own quivering soul lay under it, she could in no honesty stay them from taking their position fairly on its basis.

The door between her room and his opened, and he stood there, as she had pictured him, in his belted slenderness, coatless, his white shirt showing up cruelly the haggard oldness of his face. "You called me?" he said.

"Yes," she answered.

There were many things she wanted to say to him—well, perhaps there were and perhaps there were not. Certainly there was nothing that could help matters. She looked at him a moment, and then moved with a lagging volition toward her dressing-table.

"I have no choice but to give you this," she said, "because it came to me in trust to do so."

He did not answer her, but stood there motionless with his hand upon the door. He had not set one foot over the threshold.

She took the key of the jewel-case from its hiding-place, and with a hand that shook for all her effort at self-control opened the box. The two pages lay on the top of the trays as she had hastily thrust them within. She was going to give them to him, both.

Then as she took them up, the remembrance came to her of the exonera-

tion of her own self that Peyton had tried to put into those two lines. Whether from a sense of shame that she should need them or whether from a feeling that Loring might believe them and so be impeded in a vague way from that future happiness, she felt that it was impossible to put them into his hand.

Her fingers faltered at the touch of the pages, but she deliberately laid one down and tore the other slowly across in the middle. The lower half of this second sheet she put back blindly into the box, and then gathered up the rest and took it to him. He watched her silently, unmovingly, during this operation. As she stood before him with the papers in her hand, he did not take them but stood regarding her.

"It is from Peyton," he said.

Whether it was a question or an accusation she could not say. She bowed her head in assent.

"I do not want it," said Loring. His voice sounded very far away from her.

She moistened her lips and drew in her breath like a child who is ill.

"But see," she said, "what can I do but give them to you? There is nothing there but what a man may be permitted to say, for the sake of his own manhood, even in such a case."

Her eyes looked into his, and his unto hers. Then silently he put out his hand and took the papers from her. In a moment more his door had closed, and her room was again in darkness.

CHAPTER XI.

She was awakened next morning by the gentle sound of Elena's voice, and opened her eyes to find the girl standing beside her bed. As she stupidly stared up, pushing the hair from her face as if it were the curtain of deep dreams, Elena sat down on the edge of the bed. There was underneath the old, pale, tired look on her face a struggling youthful interest.

"I am sorry to wake you," she said, with a half-smile. "Do forgive me. But everything has been turned topsyturvy this morning, and there was no

help for it. I wasn't awake myself when Ella Shriver telephoned me. Her father has done one of his characteristic quick changes, and we are sailing to-morrow morning."

"To-morrow!" echoed Rosa, now fully roused. She drew herself lithely up in the bed and sat erect. "Why, what on earth did he do that for?"

"Oh, it's just like him," said Elena, with a little laugh. "I was quite annoyed at first, but then I rather got to like it. It is much more fun going off suddenly this way, than carrying out a lot of well-made plans and departing decorously two weeks from now."

She said nothing of the welcome relief that this early delivery had seemed to her. Nor did she need to, for the other woman understood that well enough.

Rosa's mind however passed quickly to more practical things. "But can you get ready in time?" she asked.

"That's just it," said Elena. "I can because I must. But I wanted to tell you that I have ordered the carriage and that I am afraid I shall have to keep it out the better part of the day, unless you are going to need it, and in that case I'll call up the stable again and get Colton to send me a cab."

"Why, certainly, take the carriage," said Mrs. Brinsmade. "I am not going anywhere to-day. You are ready to go out, aren't you?"

"Yes," said Elena, "and the sooner I go the better. I have ten thousand things to attend to." She rose, and pulling her coat together, stood buttoning it. "Loring was flying out of the house this morning when I went down. He said to tell you he was going to Philadelphia on business, and would not be back to-morrow. So I was in luck to get a chance to say good-by to him. He had left an outrageously big check for me at my place at table." Her voice was quite colorless as she told this, for she had felt it best to keep their talk as impersonal as possible. "I won't ask if there is anything I can do for you, for I must be utterly selfish to-day if I am to get through at all. Shall I send Babette?"

"Yes, if you will," said Rosa, and lay down again as the girl hurried out and down the stairs.

She found that her head was aching miserably, and yet that this did not seem to matter either. With the long lonely day stretching before her—for she could not bring herself to go out among her usual friends, and had written breaking all engagements—there was little better than to lie in bed in a darkened room and not have even to keep up the pretense before the servants.

The day went by in slow deliberate moments, and the fractions of hours added themselves together with as great difficulty as if they had just been promoted from long-division and had little practise in the gentle art of making the world go round. Babette had given her her bath and brushed her hair and clothed her in a fresh gown, and she had gone back to bed, refusing to drink any coffee and to have any light let into the room.

When noon came and passed, and she felt by this time as if the Wandering Jew could not have lived longer than she had, the maid brought her some tea and crisp toast, a succulent little squab, and a glass of champagne. There was one wistful little pleasure that at least she was vouchsafed. Her servants did love her. They had consulted about this dainty tray and had made it as perfect as their limited intelligence and accurate training could devise. So she sat up in her bed and ate her luncheon, feeling that each mouthful might choke her and yet determined to do her part.

She remembered with a wry little smile a moment at a luncheon of women when there had been a chorus of wailing about the servant question, and one woman had said: "But here is Mrs. Brinsmade—she never had any trouble with them." An eager circle of faces had confronted hers, and the self-elected spokeswoman had said: "But how do you do it?" She had laughed and shrugged her shoulders. "I am very polite to them, and I insist that they do their work perfectly. When

you get down to the incentive, every person, author, actor, banker, or butler enjoys doing his work well." She saw quite clearly that they had no idea what she meant, but that did not matter at all.

She drank her champagne and ate her toast—they were all human beings together, and they had done what they could, and so would she.

Then came the long horrible hours of the afternoon. It was so long, almost twelve hours before she could hope to sleep. She lay staring at the dim ceiling and the more ornate wall, and she wondered what sort of a place was to shelter her by and by. Would she go to her old house and live with her father and mother, or would she pick out some little place across the Atlantic where she would be free from scrutiny and comment? It did not matter at all to her. Wherever she was, she would be forever alone.

The darkness in her room became one with the deepening darkness outside. Elena came home at last but, hearing undoubtedly of her headache, did not intrude upon her solitary isolation. She refused pointblank to entertain the idea of dinner in any form, whether it be the historical perfume of a rose or more substantial form of sustenance. And she waited patiently, yet how impatiently, for those hours that should bring her unconsciousness.

She waited in vain, for although her mind was paralyzed as with the wandering imbecility of old age, she lay awake staring at the shadows of the room all the night long. She could not think of Loring or of Elena. Their faces occasionally snapped into view before her, now one and now the other, but there was no connected chain of ideas making the circuit of these two wheels. She knew she was alive and that they were alive, and that was all.

After the gray comfortless dawn had begun to make the old familiar objects in the room more clear to her she fell into a light sleep, which lasted only an hour or two. She woke wondering what she was waiting for. Then she remembered the departure of Elena,

that the steamer sailed at ten, that she had promised herself to go with the girl, and that even though the appointed hour was unconscionably early, according to her usual habit, she felt it now to be a wearisome future day to be desperately expected.

The early, strong, undeniable morning light, however slow in coming, did at last make its imperious way through her drawn curtains, and she rose even before Babette came to arouse her, and drew her own bath.

She was waiting for Elena at the unwontedly early breakfast-table when the girl joined her. They talked of the varying and many interests of the trip, thanking the dear God that he had made a big earth of it while he was about it, and that they could find enough in its surface to occupy their moments together even if it did not hold an atom of space in their thoughts.

There was a little shop in the Rue Quesnières—no, she had never found anybody who had ever heard of the shop—it was kept by a little withered stumpy woman and two daughters, who, she was sure, wore sailcloth under their dresses. But they made and sold such lingerie as would melt in your fingers. The needlework, the exquisite design, the inspired ingenuity—it was the one place in Paris.

Then there was a bit of a place in Charteran—they would probably pass through there in the motor on the way to the Riviera. She might know it by the old walls, and the cathedral which would hold twenty thousand souls though there were about three in the place. There she could buy an odd heavy lace—the women used it on their curtains! There was no sale for it, so few people ever came by there, and they had no sense of trade initiative, these people. But the lace was characteristic and well worth having. Then she must not forget, in Naples, to buy gloves. It was the most wonderful place for gloves—dirt cheap and of a quality!

So they talked on, over the coffee and the marmalade, quite ignoring, or pretending that they did, the soul-strip-

ping that they had endured the night but one before. The motor came around, and Elena's steamer-trunk behind the white lacing of the topmost rail gave it a look of ocean travel that made it impossible to believe it had not already gone careering on its own wheels over the green Atlantic.

They flew down through the streets, thick already with the traffic of early hours, and slid to their place on the rear platform of the ferry. As the clumsy boat churned slowly out of the slip into the perturbed waters of the Hudson, Rosa Brinsmade gave a sigh that was half a gasp and said she felt as if they were already on their way, and she for one wished she might go.

On the barren dusty dock in Hoboken, with its lowering crates and its bawling officials, the throng of waiting people continually getting in the way of the heavily laden trucks, the long bridge that the stewards tried so hard to keep clear and would still choke itself with impediments like the gullet of an old gourmand, the undesired fruit, the eternal flowers, the many voices, and the occasional tears—they made their difficult way; and in the course of time found themselves on the crowded deck of the steamer where fussy old ladies and smiling girls, gilt-capped officers and chattering foreigners, swelled the throng.

They found the Shrivvers near their staterooms, and exchanged a hurried greeting with the father while the girls, after one shrill exclamatory acknowledgment of their presence, went on with their inspection of the encumbering baskets and boxes and packages, and giggled over the huge pile of letters that lay between them on the sofa.

Elena's room was banked with offerings, and as Mr. Shriver hurried away to look after some essential equipment, Rosa stood in the doorway while the girl glanced at the cards that bore the wishes of good-will from her friends. Then becoming absorbed in the restless atmosphere that surrounded her, she stepped out again upon the deck and walked slowly onward watching the little comedies enact themselves before

her. The tragedies, and there were some such, were as usual mostly confined to the second cabin and the steerage, and she stopped for a while to watch a woman leaning over the rail weeping systematically and unceasingly as she stared down at the uplifted face of a man on the pier who wept even as she did. Neither of them made a sign or called a word to one another, but simply looked and let the ugly tears stream down their cheeks.

She turned at last from the contemplation of this miserable little tragedy and passed a familiar face. It was the head waiter in one of the great restaurants of town, arm in arm with two fashionably dressed Frenchwomen. He looked for a flashing instant uncomfortable, but as she passed him with no look of recognition she saw him regain his debonair poise.

She was making her way back to Elena's cabin when she came suddenly face to face with Miles Peyton.

"You!" she said.

He lifted his hat mechanically, but his eyes were filled with a sudden horror. "You are not crossing on this boat," he said.

"Oh, oh, no," she answered.

His face cleared, and he made an odd gesture with his hands. "I was afraid—" he said. "The list is out. I thought of you."

She gathered herself with an effort. "My cousin, Elena Roberts, is going over." She hesitated, and then came nearer to him. Her eyes were dry and her lips were parted. "She is very dear to me," she said. "I have told her all about—about you and me, for a reason I cannot give you. I don't know—she is very young in many things—what her reception of you will be. But if you can in any way serve her, or make her voyage pleasanter, will you do so?"

He half smiled. "I will do anything, as I told you, that you ask of me. I remember her. She is a woman of great sweetness and great strength. It is an unusual combination."

"Great sweetness and great strength,"

she said slowly. "Yes, she is. If she will let you, will you try to serve her?"

"Yes," he said.

"Thank you," she whispered.

She made a movement to say more but was stayed by a movement of his hand. As she looked at him wonderingly, he looked away.

"I thought perhaps you were going to say good-by," he said. "Please don't. I could not bear to hear it again."

She stood motionless a moment, and then with a movement of her head that was regally an inclination passed on. He put his hat on again after some moments, and went to stand at the rail.

Rosa went back to Elena's stateroom to find the girl looking for her.

"Just you say good-by and go along," said Elena. "These lingering farewells are awful. No human being can predict when we shall start—you know how those things go."

She drew her arm through Mrs. Brinsmade's and they crossed the little passage to the Shrivvers' suite, where the three of that family were having an amiable altercation about the disposition of the luggage. There was an odor of oranges and violets, grape-fruit and roses, in the rooms that was associated with nothing but an European departure.

Rosa said good-by to them and commended Elena to their care. Then she and the girl walked down the deck toward the companionway.

In the press of people going up and down the constricted passageway, they were pushed aside; and gradually, in waiting for an opportunity to enter the lists, retired to the rail and turned there for a look at the crowded gangway with its mass of upturned faces.

"I think it is very seldom in this world," said Elena, "that two women bare their hearts to one another as we have done. I have felt, however, that even then we did not turn them inside out. I didn't say, and never have said, I am sure, efficiently, how much I have appreciated and hugged close to me your kindness, even in that hour when I could least understand your cruelty."

Rosa looked at her. "Cruelty?" she repeated.

The girl nodded slowly. "Not intentional, I believe that; but, even in all charity, I cannot understand it."

"Cruelty to whom?"

"To me."

Rosa stared at her. "How and when?" she said at last.

On the lower deck a bell had begun to ring and hordes were pushing past them on their way to leave the ship.

"The other night," said Elena. Her hands, ungloved, clasped themselves as her arms leaned on the rail, and pressed their strength together till the knuckles shone white. "You had told me all there was to tell. You had explained to me your plan for the future. And yet at the last minute, when you must have known what it would cost me after all that you had said, you made me say that I love him."

The confusion of departure thickened about them. "But," said Rosa, who was staring with a new bewilderment now, "when I am doing it all for you!"

Elena, in her turn, lifted her eyes ablaze with mystification. "For me!" she said. "I don't know what you mean."

"But there is nothing else to it. I am setting him free that he may one day marry you, am I not?"

"You mean——"

"I mean just what I say. I am going at once to take the necessary steps to give him his freedom. Is not that for you?"

The girl's face suddenly underwent a remarkable change. "Whose freedom?" she said.

"Whose? Why, Loring's."

"Loring!" repeated Elena. She leaned heavily against the rail as she stared at Rosa. Her brilliant color rose in uncombatale waves until she seemed a rose blossoming in the wealth and warmth of June. "Loring!"

Even with an anxious official beckoning to her, Rosa remained motionless. "Certainly—who else?"

"You meant Loring? You asked me if I loved Loring?"

"I don't know what you mean," said Rosa, in echo of the other woman's words. "You do love Loring."

"I certainly do," said Elena, "but not the way you mean."

"I don't know what either of us means now," said Rosa piteously.

Elena laid her hands on the woman's two arms, letting fall the great bundle of roses she had carried on her arm. "I love Miles Peyton," she said, her voice trembling and yet of a subtle strength. "I saw what you were doing and I almost hated you. I love Miles Peyton."

Rosa almost wavered in the girl's hold. "But—but——"

"Madam, for the love of God!" cried the exasperated official.

The tumult of departure rose to pitch unbelievable. The ship's whistle had begun. With one last bewildered look Rosa hurried away under the guidance of the officer. She left Elena standing with the roses at her feet.

CHAPTER XII.

She spent the day turning over this new revelation in her mind. No better evidence of the futility of words could have been brought forward than this. She had talked with Elena, talked intimately with her, and had come away with a monstrous misapprehension of the truth. Even now she could hardly understand how she had been so mistaken, but it was far harder to understand and to believe that Elena loved Peyton. How could any one love him when Loring was in the world?

Yet, understand it little as she might, she was glad. It did not detract in the least from her own misery—indeed, it added a new load to it knowing as she did Loring's love for the girl.

But she was glad for the sake of Elena and for Peyton. She saw the long days on the steamer when they would be together, and she saw the probability that his schedule—since he had none—would be made to produce remarkable coincidences with their own. She foresaw a slow awakening to a new comprehension of love and life at its

best coming to the man, and the future quiescence of all his troublous passion for her. It would fade slowly under the southern sun, and some day—in Capri, or Amalfi, or Venezia—it would become so white that the name of Elena might be writ across it as if there had never been anything there but a black sheet of paper.

But what then of Loring? The thought tormented her, for she had come to care for his happiness beyond all others. What was she to become of him in those days?

She dined alone after a fashion, and then went up to her room to be undressed. It was very lonely in the house, and it was more lonely in her heart. What was she to do? For the first time in her life she realized that this was impossible for her to decide alone. For the first time she understood what it was to be married to a man on whom one might depend in all ways. She would simply ask him what to do, and he would tell her.

A certain peace came over her as she thus abandoned herself to the support of another, and a feeling of lassitude. She lay down in her chaise-longue, and wondered what it would be that he would ask her to do. Whatever it was, she was eager and ready to do it. That was all, and it was easy. She loved him so much that the harder his verdict and decision the more she should delight in accomplishing it for him.

Babette went away, leaving her for the night, and she lay there childishly at ease, wondering when they would come face to face with the crystallization of the future. She lay there a long time counting the hours away in the new quiescent strength that had come to her.

She did not move when she heard him come in. She did not so much as falter in her regular childish breathing when she heard him go past her door and into his own room. She was so ready, so prepared, to give him the uttermost drop of blood in her heart that when he knocked at her door she knew no deviation from her unshaken poise.

He opened the door at the sound of her voice and came in. She was quite at ease and utterly controlled. Why should she not be, since there was nothing before her that could affright her?

"When you gave me that letter," he said as he stood looking at her from his distance, "last night——"

"Yes?" she said, as he paused.

"You tore off the lower half of the page."

"Yes," she said again.

"Where is the key of your jewel-case?"

She sat up, and swung herself to her feet. A further motion of the arm was almost all that was necessary. She held the key toward him.

He took it from her hand, looking steadfastly at her. Then he crossed to her dressing-table and unlocked the box. The half-sheet was lying just as she left it, crumpled as she had thrust it into the box. He took it out and held it toward her.

"Take it," he said.

She obeyed him.

"It is an exoneration of you," he said.

She bent her head.

"I do not want that from any one but yourself. I am utterly at sea, and in very great suffering. Will you please tear it up."

She sat a moment in silence, and then raised her eyes. "I had no right to give you a part," she said. "Will you not please read it, so that I may have done what I was entrusted to do? I thought differently last night, but I think now I was wrong."

He was silent a moment, regarding her fixedly. Then he said slowly: "I would rather not. But if you ask me to, I will."

For answer she put the torn page into his hand. Then she sat forward taking her head in her two white hands.

"It is quite true that I never wrote him and that I never cared about him," she said. "But that does not matter now. The point is that I was vain enough to be amused by his adoration, and that I so little understood myself and life—and you—as to be able to be

amused by such a thing. The worst thing I have ever done in all my life was when I lied to you that night."

"I knew you were lying," he said. "I could not bear that."

"Yes," she assented. "And yet all day I had been praying the dear Lord for a chance to tell you the truth. I do not understand what devil gripped me in that hour. I wanted you so much, and your love and trust, and the letter when it came to me from your hand seemed to make that all so impossible that I lost all sense of everything except desperation, and I seized on desperate means. It was the wrong thing, and it has no exculpation. It is done and it is finished."

He said nothing.

"I went up to Elena that night and told her what I had done, and she was very sweet to me. I have thought it over while you were away, and I am ready to do anything you want me to. Perhaps I needed something like this, or as harsh as this, to wake me to a realization of what made up my life. Whatever the necessity was, and whatever the means were, I do know now, and I would rather love you as I do love you now, and never see you again, than to have you go on never knowing. For I did not know."

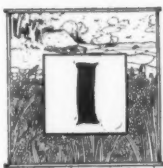
She heard the sound of tearing paper as she sat staring at the floor. What was he going to ask her to do? What was going to be her judgment? Of course he did not love her, and they could no longer be to one another what they had. It was a curious irony that she should have learned what she had to give only in time to have the gift of it refused and impossible. But always there was the sustaining thought—she loved him. And the future, whatever it held for her, held no terrors and no uncertain ties. She could and would do anything, and nothing could touch the serenity of her knowledge.

In the silence that followed the tearing of the papers she sat waiting. Then she felt a touch on her arm and looked up. "Well?" she said, brokenly.

"You are very tired, sweetheart," he said. "My little woman!"

THE BACK BEDROOM

By Joseph
C. Lincoln



If you ever go to South Trumet to spend a summer vacation I advise you, as an entirely disinterested friend, to board at the Billings House. It was originally a little story-and-a-half house, connected with the barn by a series of sheds and covered passageways, but it has been "built on" and added to by numerous ells and additions until it is now a picturesque nondescript of goodly size where you can enjoy the finest ocean views along the whole shore of the Cape and eat the finest 'longshore meals ever cooked; for no one can beat Mrs. Billings in the cooking line, if we, her boarders, do say it. There are few trees, and the nearest neighbor is a half-mile distant; but it is not for trees or neighbors that one visits South Trumet.

The first summer I spent at the Billings House found me quartered in the "back bedroom," a big, old-fashioned apartment, which was a part of the house as originally built. There were windows on each side of the room, two with little square panes, through which the view was distorted and twisted in a fascinating way, and one, evidently modern, with big panes of clear glass. One night when Josiah Billings, Mrs. Billings' husband, was in the room, I asked him what had happened to the window which the modern one must have replaced. It took him nearly an hour to answer the question.

"Humph," he said. "Well, now, there's considerable of a yarn hitched onto that. You might call it a Christ-

mas yarn, if you wanted to; then again you might say 'twas a ghost-story. Little of both, I shouldn't wonder, and it dates way back to the time when Joey, that's our son who's up to school to Boston, was less'n two year old, and me and Sarah, my wife, first came down here to live. There wasn't no window there then; there was a door and it opened into another room, a little room that we used to call the back bedroom at that time, this one bein' the spare room.

"You see, we hadn't been married very long. I was to work in the barrel factory over to Orleans and cal'lated to stay there rest of my life, bein' foreman and likin' the job. But I got to feelin' kind of poorly and the doctor he says to me, 'Joe,' says he, 'your bellows are gettin' leaky,' he says. 'You musn't stay inside no longer. You've got to be outdoors if you want to live.'

"And Sarah, my wife, speaks right up and says she, 'Josiah,' she says, 'you do what the doctor tells you. Never mind what becomes of your job. What good is your job to me if I haven't got you? We'll go to farmin'; you know we always said it would be fun to farm.'

"'Farm!' says I. 'Where'll we farm, for the land sakes? Ain't nobody givin' out farms with a pound of tea that I know of.'

"And says she, bein' smarter'n a red-pepper plaster: 'We'll go right down to South Trumet to the place Uncle Abner left me and we'll try it there. We can't no more'n starve and I'll risk our doin' that while there's clams to be dug alongshore.'

"And so we done it. Her uncle, Abner Cahoon, was an old coastin' skipper who had brought her up after her own folks was drowned at sea. Uncle Abner was wuth consider'ble at one time, but he lost all his money, includin' a nice home in Hyannis, and all he had left when he died—which happened aboard his schooner on a v'yage to New Orleans—was this old house and lot in Trumet. He'd inherited it from his wife's folks.

"So, after consider'ble arguin' back and forth, we moved down here bag and baggage. Bought some farmin' tools, I did, and a horse and a cow and a pig and some chickens. Sarah named the horse George Washin'ton, 'count of his havin' a Roman nose and bein' old enough, pretty nigh, to be father of his country. Then she christened the cow Martha Washin'ton and the pig Patrick Henry, so's to have everything Revolutionary and in keepin'. I told her she'd better go ahead and Revolutionize the hens, but that was too much of a job; she labeled one rooster George the Third and t'other John Hancock and let it go at that. However, the very first scrap they had George licked the stuffin' out of Hancock and, as that was contrary to history, she changed the names around and fixed it all right.

"Afore we'd lived in the old house a fortnit I see that, if we was to live in any comfort, I must spend money for repairs and such. I'd saved a little somethin', of course, but I'd bought shares in the barrel factory with it and the company didn't want to buy me out until fall, when the cranb'ry season was over. So Sarah suggested my goin' over to Wellmouth and tryin' to borrow some off of old man Solomon Cobb.

"Solomon was a rich old codger who run a real-estate shop and loaned money out at interest. He'd been mate along with Uncle Abner for a long spell—was with him when he died, for the matter of that—and had made his pile somehow and retired from the sea. Sarah thought, bein' as he knowed her uncle so well, he'd prob'ly be willin' to oblige. So one mornin' early I hitched

up George Washin'ton in the buggy, and drove over to see him.

"He was in his office when I got there. 'Twas a mean little shack, all dirt and cobwebs, and old Sol looked to me the meanest thing in it. However, he heard me through and then set and looked at me, pullin' on his whiskers like a man haulin' wild carrots out of a turnip patch.

"'Humph!' says he, 'So you want me to lend you the loan of a thousand dollars, hey? Humph! Well, I have lent money in my time, but it's my experience that it's a dumsight easier to borrow than 'tis to pay back. Are them barrel shares all the security you got?'

"'Well,' says I, 'they're good enough, ain't they? Ought to be wuth consider'ble more'n a thousand anyhow. Besides, I cal'lute to be honest and—'

"'Yes, yes,' says he, interruptin. 'I cal'lute you do cal'lute so. But that ain't nothin'. I could run a seine through this county any day and load a schooner with honest men; and there wouldn't nary one of 'em have cash enough to pay for the wear and tear on the net. Honesty's good policy, maybe, but this ain't a policy-shop.'

"My back fin begun to rise. He made me huffy.

"'All right,' I says, gettin' out of my chair, 'then I'll go where they play the honest game. Good-by. You needn't weed your face no more on my account.'

"He left off the whisker-pullin' long enough to wave one hand. 'Belay,' says he. 'Set down and let your b'iler cool. Temper's a good thing to play with, if you can afford it. I ain't rich enough, myself. I ain't said "No" yet, have I? So you're Abner Cahoon's niece's husband. I want to know! Humph!'

"'Well,' says I, 'and now you do know, humph!'

"He weeded a spell longer. Then he says, 'Look here,' he says, 'seein' as you married Sarah Cahoon I'll strain a p'int and be obligin'. I don't care about your barrel shares. Got all the stock I want just now. But I'll let you have a thousand dollars and you can give me a short-term mortgage on the

house and let you're livin' in. Make it payable next December. Only, you must pay up then or out you go. Business is business.'

"Well, I thought it over and it sounded good to me. A thousand was all the old place was wuth and, besides that, I figgered that I could sell my factory shares by October anyhow. So I says 'Done,' and agreed to come over in a week, sign the papers, and get the money.

"He follered me out as fur as the door.

"Get up, George," says I to the horse.

"Is the critter named George?" he asks.

"Yes," says I. 'George Washin'-ton. And the cow's Martha Washin'-ton and the pig's Patrick Henry. Sarah named 'em. The baby thinks more of that pig than I do of all my money.'

"Humph!" says he, dry as a salt-herrin' breakfast. 'Yes, I shouldn't wonder. So there's a baby, hey?'

"You bet! Smartest little shaver goin'." She couldn't get along without him.

"Humph!" he says again. 'He was a reg'lar camel for humphs. I s'pose not. Still, I've managed to worry along without young ones so far. Can't afford 'em. Give my love to your wife.'

"Twas the only thing that he'd ever been known to give to anybody, so I took it along as a kind of curiosity. I drove home at a pretty good clip, feelin' toler'ble satisfied and happy. I hove in sight of the old place about eight o'clock and the fust welcome I got was from Patrick Henry who come tearin' out from his sleepin'-quarters under the back shed and rubbed along the side of his pen, gruntin' to beat the cars. He was a fairly well-grown pig when I bought him and was fattenin' up fast, owin' to the feedin' he got from Sarah and the baby.

"Sarah herself, leadin' little Joey by the hand, met me afore I reached the barn. I see right off somethin' was the matter; Sarah looked troubled. However, she wanted to know how I'd made out with Sol Cobb, so I told her.

"And now," says I, 'what's wrong with you? Somethin', I know. Has Joey fell down-stairs?'

"No, 'twan't that. Baby was all right. 'But, Josiah,' she says, earnest, 'the queerest thing has happened. The strangest thing. Now, in broad daylight, it sounds ridic'ulous, but when I heard it it was dreadful. The cold chills run up and down my back. Somethin' is in the back bedroom.'

"The back bedroom?" says I. 'Which? The little one over the kitchen? What's in it—spiders?'

"No, no! Somethin' else, somethin' that snores.'

"Snores! For the land sakes what do you—"

"Listen," she says. 'After you'd gone this mornin' I couldn't sleep, so I thought I'd get up and do the washin'. When I did get up it looked some like rain, and I happened to remember we'd left all the windows open up-stairs to air out the rooms. So, as 'twas still kind of dark, I took the lamp and went up. I went into the big spare room fust and then I heard it. It come from the little room that opens off the spare one, and it was the sound of snorin'.'

"Get out!" says I. 'That room's empty. There ain't even a bed in it.'

"I know it. That's what makes it so awful. It is empty. It was empty then. When I went in with the lamp and looked there was nothin' there; but I heard the sound of snorin' as plain as I hear you speak now.'

"I haw-hawed right out. 'Ho, ho!' says I. 'Sarah, you don't mean to tell me you b'lieve in ghosts. And whoever heard of a ghost that snores?'

"But she didn't laugh. 'It was snorin', I tell you,' says she. 'And Josiah, when I was a little girl I used to sleep right next to my Cousin Lucinda who died of pneumonia. In the very next room. She snores terrible, and Josiah, this snores just like her.'

"I laughed again. 'Land of love!' I says out. 'Do you think your Cousin Lucinda has h'isted herself out of a comfortable graveyard over to Orham to come way down here and snore in an empty bedroom? There, there!

Don't you worry, old lady. Soon's I get this horse fed I'll step up, and if there's any snorin' spooks around we'll put clothes-pins on their noses. Hey, Joey, my son?"

"So up I went and, except for cobwebs and dust and a few flies buzzin' against the window-panes, there wa'n't a thing in that back bedroom. I told Sarah I cal'lated 'twas the flies she heard snorin', but no, she wouldn't have it so. However, I laughed her out of it finally, and, at last, she owned up that it might have been just her imagination.

"At the end of the week I drove over to see Solomon again, the mortgage was fixed up, and I got my thousand. Then I had the roof shingled, painted up the place inside and out, built a new hen-house and yard, bought a truck wagon, and a plow, and some farmin' tools, and had six hundred left when I'd finished. Then I started in farmin' in earnest. As for the ghost in the back bedroom, we forgot all about that.

"'Twas in July that my Aunt Sophrony Hallet come over from Bayport to stay a few days. She was a good old soul, but nervous as a witch and the greatest hand to drink tea that ever I see. She kept the teapot on the stove from mornin' till night, and every five minutes or so she'd go out and fill up her b'iler; seemed to run herself by tea-power, as you might say. We put her in the spare bedroom, of course, havin' no other furnished place for her to sleep.

"For three days everything was fust-rate, but on the mornin' of the fourth I came down-stairs at five and found Aunt Sophrony there ahead of me. The old lady's extension valise was packed and strapped and she was shakin' like a plate of blanc-mange, lemon blanc-mange of course, she bein' so yellor from her tea-drinkin'.

"Well, Aunt Sophrony," says I, 'you're up airy, ain't you? What's the matter? Couldn't you sleep?"

"Sleep! she says, groanin'. 'Don't talk to me about sleepin'! I want you to drive me right over to the depot, Josiah. I'm goin' back home.'

"Goin' home?" says I. 'What for? Thought you was cal'latin' to stay a fortnit.'

"Well, she had cal'lated to, but she'd changed her mind. She wa'n't feelin' good and thought she better be back afore she got sick. Nothin' me or Sarah could say would make her change her mind, so I had to hitch up George Washin'ton and take her to the depot. While waitin' for the train she got me by the arm and whispered in my ear:

"Nephew," says she, 'I didn't mean to tell you, but I guess I'd better. I sha'n't live very much longer; I've had a warnin'.'

"A warnin'?" I says. 'Go 'long! What you talkin' about?"

"Yes, a warnin'," says she. 'You knew I was a twin, didn't you?"

"A which?"

"A twin. I had a twin sister—your Aunt Keziah—that died when she was only nineteen. She used to sleep with me and she snored dreadful. Well, Josiah, as true as I live and breathe this minute, Keziah come to me last night.'

"Come to you?" I sings out. 'You mean you dreamed about her. There ain't nothin' strange in that. The amount of strong tea you h'ist in would—'

"Hush! Hush!" she says. 'Don't be sacrilegious. 'Twa'n't the tea. Josiah, I woke up at three o'clock this mornin' and I heard Keziah snorin' as plain as I ever heard anything.'

"Well, I thought of what Sarah had heard in that very room and, for a minute, my neck got prickly behind. But I wa'n't goin' to let her know it. I laughed and commenced to poke fun, but she most cried and I quit. Seems she'd got up and lit the lamp, soon's she heard the noise, and gone explorin'. She didn't find nothin', but the snorin' kept on. It seemed, so she said, to come from the empty room next to hers.

"And that room's the very image of the one me and Keziah used to sleep in," she says. 'Good-by, Josiah. Be

a good man, won't you? You'll never see me no more in *this* life.'

"I laughed, but she was all but cryin' when she got aboard the train. I drove back home with my mind made up. The fust chance I got I was goin' to sleep in that spare bedroom myself. I didn't tell Sarah nothin' of it, though.

"My chance come along the fust of August. Sarah hadn't been feelin' real well. It had got to be quite the habit of summer folks to drive down to our house on picnics and have her cook chowder for 'em. Her cookin' made a hit, I tell you. Lots of 'em said if we'd open a boardin'-house they'd patronize it reg'lar, but you can't put many boarders in one room, so we couldn't think of it. Yet it did sound temptin'; farmin' so fur wa'n't very profitable.

"So when Sarah's cousins up to Wareham wanted her and Joey to visit 'em I coaxed her to go. She was afraid I wouldn't get along alone, but I pooh-poohed the idea, and finally she agreed to go for two or three days. The fust night after she'd gone I tackled the spare room.

"And that night I heard it. I meant to stay awake a spell and listen, but I didn't. I'd been busy all day, pickin' some summer apples off that old tree out yonder, and by the time I'd rolled the last barrel into the potato cellar I was tired. So I fell asleep about as soon as my head touched the pillar.

"I woke up about half-past two. What woke me was the rain and wind. A howlin' old no'theast gale had riz, and the blinds was rattlin' and the old house shakin'. But 'twa'n't them noises that made me set up in bed. 'Twas somethin' else—snorin' comin' from the little back bedroom.

"There wa'n't no mistake about it. When the gusts would let up it sounded clear and plain. A long snort like, with a puff and kind of groan along with it. I'm a toler'ble spunky man, but 'twas a wild night and I knew there wa'n't another human critter nigher than Shadrack Ginn's house, and that's way off around the p'int. I wanted to cover my head with the bedclothes, but I didn't. I got up, lit the

lamp—I never knew matches to act so contrary afore—and marched into that room. There wa'n't nothin' there, of course.

"But the snorin' was there. Every time the wind would let up I heard it. And all I could think of was the way my grandfather, who died of apoplectic shock, snored in his last sickness. I marched around that room three times, holdin' the lamp high and low and lookin', lookin', lookin'. Then I stood in the middle of the floor and waited a spell, feelin' the long shivers begin in the small of my back and crawl up to where my bald spot is now. Then I went back to my own room, shook myself into my clothes, and went down to set by the kitchen stove till mornin'. A fool, wa'n't I? Oh, yes, sartin! Only you try it yourself some time.

"And after breakfast Shad Ginn himself happened in to see me.

"'Well,' says he, 'ain't blowed away, I see. That's the biggest summer gale we've had sence old Laban Eldredge died in this very house. He rented it a spell, three years afore you folks took it. 'Twas just such a night as last night when he died. He was a poor old critter, all alone in the world, and when he was sick me and some of the men alongshore took turns settin' up with him. Seem's if I could hear the poor old thing snorin' now.'

"'Snorin'?' says I. 'Did he snore?'

"'I should say he did,' he says. 'I never heard such snores in my life. 'Twa'n't natural; 'twas his sickness made him do it.'

"'Where did he die?' I asked; but I knew afore he answered.

"'In the back bedroom,' he says. 'The little one over the kitchen. He had a ramshackle old bedstead in there. They burned it when he got through.'

"That was enough for me, and some left over. That very forenoon I drove to the Center and bought a couple of big bolts. Then I come home, screwed them bolts to the door-frame of the back bedroom, shut the door and bolted it. If there was any more snores in that room I didn't mean they should be heard.

"Our bad luck begun right then. Sarah come home from Wareham sick; and sick she stayed for two months. The doctor's bill was over a hundred dollars and I had to hire a woman nurse besides. Then Martha Washin'-ton, the cow, died. Then what few cranberries I had on the swamp was sp'iled by an airy frost, and, to finish up, with, the barrel factory failed and my shares wa'n't wuth powder to blow 'em to the hereafter.

"That was the final swallow that downed Jonah. When I heard that news I set down on the choppin'-block by the barn door and looked out over the sea, all gray and dismal in the November dulness, and the thermometer of my spirits went down till the quicksilver knocked a hole in the bottom of the tube. If it wa'n't for Sarah and the baby I knew a nice deep 'hole right off the bar that would have suited me fust-rate.

"However, there's no use drowndin' till the ship really sinks, so I went straight over to Wellmouth to see Cobb and beg for an extension of time. But 'twain't no use; might as well have begged a dogfish to let up on a school of mack'el. The old man heard me through with a face on him sour as last month's milk.

"You remember what I told you, don't ye?" says he. "'Twas pay up on December fust or out you went. Well, business is business."

"I hadn't nothin' to say, so I headed for the door. But he called me back afore I got clear out.

"Well," he says, as if every word hurt him, "I s'pose I mustn't be too hard on you, seein' as you married Abner Cahoon's niece. I'll give you till New-year's to pay me. But no more; not another day. Understand?"

"I understood, but I got mighty little comfort from the understandin'. A month more or less made precious little diff'rence, as I see it just then.

"That was a dreadful December. I went to everybody I could think of, tryin' to raise the cash; but 'twas hopeless. Hard times was on full blast, and they fixed me. There was nothin' for it but

to get out on the fust of January, and what would become of us then, I didn't know.

"Christmas was right on top of us. We'd always give each other presents, but this year that was out of the question. But there was Joey; he was chatterin' baby talk about Santy Claus and it went to our hearts to hear him. Finally I vowed that young one should have at least one present if it sent me to the poorhouse. So on the afternoon of Christmas Eve I hitched up George Washin'ton and started for the Center to buy some toys or somethin'.

"Sarah says to me, just as I was drivin' out of the yard: 'What'll we do for Christmas dinner?' she says.

"Don't know," says I. "Less you want me to kill a hen—or Patrick Henry."

"We can't spare a hen," says she. "And you wouldn't kill Pat, Josiah! 'Twould break baby's heart."

"You see, Joey had come to love that hog next to us, as you might say. The critter was awful knowin' and all but talked when a body went nigh his pen. Him and the baby was great chums. We'd spoke of killin' him often enough, and he got so fat he couldn't scursely waddle, but we couldn't make up our minds to turn him into pork. We simply *couldn't*—not till the last gun fired anyhow.

"All right," I says; 'then we'll have to get along on salt fish and clams, I guess. Never mind, Sarah; I don't care. Don't cry, old lady. Maybe we'll pull through yet.'

"I 'most wish that awful Cobb man was dead," says she. "It's wicked, but I don't care, I do 'most wish it."

"'Twas snowin' when I left home. Time I reached the Center 'twas a fair-sized blizzard, and when I bought a few playthings for Joey and a shawl for Sarah 'twas about as bad a night as ever I was out in. I could scursely see George Washin'ton's ears when I got on the road home.

"Fact is, 'twas so dark and snowy that I almost run over a person. I heard George snort and felt him stop. Then, out the blizzard and blackness

came a voice—weak and feeble, but with a rasp in it that sounded familiar.

"What in tarnation are you doin'?" gasps the voice. "If you kill me I'll have the law onto you."

"What in the world," says I, "are you doin'—away off here at this time of night, and a night like this? And who are you, anyhow?"

"I don't know's that's any of your business," begins the voice. Then it stops with a kind of groan. "Oh, Lordy!" it goes on. "I'm—I'm all beat out and—and freezin' to death. I—I—"

"I piled out of the buggy like a shot, and the next minute I had the man round the waist leadin' him to the carriage. I couldn't see his face scursely, but I knew who 'twas. You've guessed it, of course. 'Twas old Sol Cobb himself."

"Seems the old critter had driven to Trumet that afternoon, on some money matter or other, and his horse had fell down and strained its knee so 'twasn't safe to drive it home again. And—and here's the characteristic part—Sol wouldn't hire another one nor put to the hotel. 'Stead of that he'd started to walk to the house of a feller that owed him somethin', callatin' to sleep there free gratis for nothin', and be driven home next mornin' at the same price. But the dark had got him off the road and the storm had pretty nigh finished him. If I hadn't happened along I cal'late the wish Sarah almost wished would have come true."

"I bundled him up in the buggy and give George a free rein. The horse knew his way home by the feel of his feet, I judge, for we fetched port safe and sound. Sarah was waitin' up, anxious as could be. Joey had hung up his stockin' and been tucked in long afore."

"Sol hadn't said much while I was drivin' home, bein' too beat out, I cal'late. And he never said much while we was fillin' him with hot tea and toast and beach plum jelly. But the more he ate the better he felt and, as he begun to feel more like himself, he begun to act that way. He looked

round that dinin'-room as if he owned it, and give his orders like the cap'n of a ship. I could see Sarah bitin' her lips and swallowin' hard, and 'twas all I could do to keep from knockin' the old skinflint under the stove. But I remembered that he *was* old and probably couldn't help bein' what he was—made that way, you understand—so I kept my fists in my pockets and my mouth shut."

"At last he says: 'Well, I'm goin' to turn in. Don't anybody ever go to bed in this house?'"

"I never answered; just took the lamp and led the way up-stairs to the spare room. 'Twas cold as Greenland up there; we hadn't set up no stove, there wa'n't any place to set one up if we'd had it. And my! How the wind slapped the snow against the windows!"

"The old feller looked the room over. "'Humph!' says he. 'Where's that door go to?'"

"'Into an empty room,' says I. "'If it's empty what you got it bolted up tight for? Keep somethin' there you don't want folks to see?'"

"'No, no,' I says, 'it's empty, I tell you.'"

"'I don't b'lieve it. Let's see.' And over he walks, as cheeky as a child with the mumps, unbolts the door to that little back bedroom and throws it open. I started forward to stop him, bein' red hot clear through, but he turned and looked at me, sort of sneerin', and asks: 'You raised that thousand yet?'"

"I hadn't, so I said nothin'. "He stared into the little room. Then says he, disappointed like: 'Humph! 'Tis empty, ain't it. Well, good night.'"

"I didn't wish him no pleasant dreams. Off I marched and heard him slam the spare-room door astern of me. Sarah and me put the few things I'd bought into the baby's stockin' and then we went to bed. Our room was right at the foot of the stairs."

"We laid awake talkin' a spell, about how strange 'twas that I should save the life of the very man who was goin'

to turn us out of house and home and so on, and then we fell asleep—anyhow I did. When I woke up, the lamp was lit, the clock showed 'twas four o'clock in the mornin', the storm had gone down, and Sarah was standin' over me, shakin' me and screechin' into my ear in whispers.

"'Josiah,' she whispers, 'wake up! Oh, *do* wake up! Listen! Listen!'"

"Soon's I got my senses about me I did listen, and what I heard made my knees rattle together under the bed-clothes; it done that, honest.

"As I said, the storm had gone down and 'twas all quiet except the growl of the surf alongshore. And down the stairs, from the spare room overhead, came muffled groans and sounds of somebody sobbin' and mutterin'.

"I looked at Sarah and she at me.

"'Is he sick?' I whispers, jumpin' out of bed. 'We must go right off and see.'

"I was headin' for the stairs, but she stopped me.

"'No, no!' she begged, holdin' me tight. 'It ain't that. I went up a little ways and I heard— Oh, Josiah! he's talkin' to the *ghost*!'"

"Then the creeps went over me, don't you b'lieve they didn't. But along with 'em come a mighty big dose of curiosity. I didn't want to go up them stairs—for a grown man I was the scariest thing in two counties—but I went just the same. On tiptoe I went, and Sarah went with me.

"The spare-room-door was shut just as I left it. Underneath it and through the keyhole showed lamplight in sharp yellow streaks. And from behind the door we could hear old Solomon Cobb talkin' straight on and on, beggin', cryin', prayin' to somebody or some thing.

"'Oh!' we heard him groan. 'Oh, don't no more, Abner! *Don't! Please don't!* I know what you mean! I know it all! I'm sorry! I'll make it right. I swear to the Almighty I will! I've been wicked; I know it, but I'll fix it all right. I give my solemn word. If you mean this for a warnin' I'll—'

"And so forth and so on. 'Twas

dreadful to hear, but that wa'n't the worst part of it. Between every sentence and whenever Solomon stopped for breath, that horrible snorin' sounded, plain as day.

"Sarah grabbed a-holt of me and staggered.

"'Take me down-stairs, Josiah,' she whispered. 'I'm 'fraid I'm goin' to faint away.'

"I took her down. I hadn't no strong objections to goin', myself.

"We dressed as fast as we could. Neither of us had any notion of more sleep that mornin'. And while I was fixin' the fire and Sarah was tryin' to keep her nerves steady enough to handle a dish without breakin' it, down comes Solomon. If he was surprised to find us up so early he didn't say so. He looked so white and sick 'twould have been pitiful in anybody else, and down he flops in a rocker and sits starin' at the fire. We never spoke to him nor him to us.

"By and by the mornin' broke, clear and fine. 'Twas goin' to be a beautiful Christmas Day for them who could enjoy it. Joey was asleep yet, but his stockin' hung by the chimney-piece, lookin' warty and fat; fifty cents'll make quite a show in children's presents if you're careful what you buy.

"'Breakfast is ready,' says Sarah to me.

"'Breakfast,' says I to Solomon.

"He woke up, in a way of speakin', with a jump and turned his old eyes our way. And *how* old they did look, and the rest of him, too.

"'Breakfast!' he says, slow. 'Don't talk breakfast to me! I'll never eat again in this world.'

"'Yes, yes, you will, too,' says I. 'If you taste them fried clams of Sarah's you'll eat a whole lot. If you don't, you'll be the fust one.'

"But he only shook his head. 'Wait,' he says; 'wait. I've got somethin' to say fust. Somethin' to say to both of you, and to Sarah in partic'lar. I've had a warnin', and I want to clear my conscience afore I die. I've promised the dead I'd do it, and I'm goin' to. Set down and listen.'

"Well, we set. Cobb looked us both over. Then he went on.

"'Sarah Cahoon,' he says, callin' my wife by her maiden name, 'Sarah Cahoon,' says he, 'I've been a bad man. Years ago I swore by all that was good and great I'd look out for you and see that you was comfortable and happy 'long's you lived. And instead of that I was goin' to take your home away from you. I thought I was mighty smart and was doin' a good stroke of business. No mortal man could have made me think diff'rent; *but an immortal one did!*'

"He groaned and wiped his forehead. I looked at Sarah, and she at me. What next was comin' we didn't know.

"'Twas your Uncle Abner, Sarah,' goes on Solomon, 'that was the makin' of me. I sailed fust mate for him fourteen year. And he always treated me fine, raised my wages right along, and the like of that. 'Twas him that put me in the way of investin' my money in them sugar stocks and the rest. He made me rich, or headed me that way. And when he lost all his own cash and was dyin' aboard the old schooner, he calls me to him and he says:

"'Sol,' he says, 'Sol, I've done considerable for you, and you've said you was grateful. Well, I'm goin' to ask a favor of you. I ain't got a cent of my own left, and my niece Sarah, that I love same as if she was my own child, will be pretty hard put to it to get along. I want you to look after her. If ever the time comes that she needs money or help I want you to do for her what I'd do if I was here. If you don't,' he says, risin' on one elbow in the bunk, 'I'll come back and ha'nt you. Promise on your solemn oath.' And I promised. And you know how I've kept that promise. And last night he come back. Yes, sir, he come back!

"We never said nothin'; just set and stared at him. He groaned again and went on:

"'Last night,' says he, 'up in that bedroom I woke up and, as sure as I'm settin' here this minute, I heard Cap'n Abner Cahoon snorin' just as he snored afore his death aboard the schooner,

T. J. Smalley, in the stateroom next to mine. I knew it in a minute, but I got up and went all round my room and the empty one alongside. There was nothin' there, of course. Nothin' but the snorin'. And I got down on my knees and swore to set things right this very day. Give me a pen and ink and paper.'

"I was too set back to get anything, but Sarah fetched the writin' things. He scribbled a few lines and passed the paper to me. I read out loud what was written on it and my mouth fell open and stayed so. 'Twas a receipt in full for the thousand dollars he'd lent me.

"Through the trance I was in I heard Sarah sobbin' and tryin' to thank him. And thanks was the one thing he wouldn't have.

"'No, no!' says he. 'I'm a wicked, condemned, lonely critter. Nobody ever cared a darn for me nor ever will. Friendless I've lived sence Cap'n Abner passed away and friendless I'll die. And serve me right. I've had my warnin' and my time's up. I——'

"And just then who should come tumblin' out of the crib in our room but little Joey, the baby. In he comes tearin' and then he stops and gazes at Sol Cobb.

"'Santy Claus!' says he, in his baby talk. 'It's Santy Claus tum to bring baby Merry Christmas.'

"I tried to make the young one understand that 'twa'n't Santy at all, but he wouldn't have it. Over he goes and climbs on the old man's knees.

"'Santy Claus,' says he. 'Baby loves Santy Claus. He dood man.'

"Solomon didn't know what to say and neither did I, but Sarah was up to time, as usual.

"'It's a sign,' says she, clappin' her hands. 'It's a sign sent by Providence. It means your forgiveness, Mr. Cobb, and that everything's goin' to be all right with you now.'

"Well, it was a Merry Christmas after all, the merriest one ever I had. Old Sol seemed to believe Joey's lovin' him *was* a sign, and he spunked right up. Ate breakfast, he did, and a whole lot of it, and for dinner I killed the last

rooster we had left, and Sarah just laid herself out on her cookin'. Chowder and chicken pie and preserves and an Injun puddin' that would set you hankerin' in your sleep. Out of nothin', as you might say, she cooked a meal that was a perfect wonder. It got Cobb to thinkin' and the upshot of it was that afore spring he made up his mind to back us in openin' a summer boarding-house. 'Twas a good investment for him. You can see yourself how it's turned out.

"He had a good time, too; the best he ever had, I callate. It opened his heart so that he give Joey five dollars for a Christmas present, and if that wa'n't a miracle then there never was one. I offered to drive him home after dinner, but he wouldn't hear of it; he wanted to spend one more night in that spare room with the door to the back bedroom open. Why? Why, to hear whether or not the snorin' ghost would be on deck. If it wa'n't he figgered that 'twould show he was forgiven and wouldn't die just yet.

"And no ghost snored that night. Or, for the matter of that, any other nights. I laid the spook that afternoon. I happened to be in the cellar after dinner and Joey was with me. The door to the potato cellar stood wide open, as Sarah had left it the day afore. And there, in the dark of that cellar, I heard the snorin', loud and plain.

"My hair begun to rise, but Joey laughed and danced up and down.

"Piggy!" says he. "Patty go 'Ugh! Ugh!'"

"Hey?" I says. "Hey? Why——"

"And into that potato cellar I went. The pig-pen run under the house, as I've told you, and it backed right up against the partition. There was cracks in that partition, wide ones. And against t'other side of them cracks laid Patrick Henry, full of a dinner that made him sleep even in the daytime, and snorin' like a steam-engyne.

"Then I begun to do some more ex-

plorin'. In the reg'lar cellar was a pipe-hole where they used to have an old stove to heat water for washin'. It opened into the chimney, the old one we didn't use. Up to the ha'ted room went me, feelin' brave enough now, and, knowin' what to look for. Naturally enough I found it—another pipe-hole high up in the wall of the little back bedroom, but papered over so's you couldn't see it, no matter how you looked. And the paper was stretched tight as a drum-head.

"So there was the ghost. Whenever that potato-cellar door was left open, and whenever Patrick Henry took a notion to sleep way back in his sty, the noise of his gruntin' come up the pipe-hole like one of them hotel speakin'-tubes. And the tight-stretched paper over the hole in the back bedroom helped to make the sound more mysterious and spooky. I s'pose we'd have found it out some time or other if we hadn't been so sure 'twas a ghost. As 'twas I found it out that Christmas Day.

"I never said nothin' to Solomon, nor to Sarah neither till we was alone the next forenoon. Then the three of us, she and me and the baby, was leanin' over the edge of the pen, lookin' at good old Patrick Henry, waddlin' and gruntin' in front of us.

"So it was him," says Sarah. "And we owe it all to him! Oh, Josiah! You'll never kill him, will you?"

"Kill him?" says I. "Kill him? Why, he's your Cousin Lucinda and my Aunt Keziah and my grandfather and old Laban Eldredge and your Uncle Abner. He's the whole blessed family, and more besides. Killin' him would be double back-action homicide. No, sir! He'll die of old age."

"And that's what he died of. But when Solomon Cobb begun remodelin' the place for our boardin'-house scheme he had the little back bedroom tore down. He wa'n't goin' to take no chances of bein' 'warned' again."

THE ART AGENT

By Clara C. Laughlin



BAILEY HOWISON sat third from "the door of hope" on the bench outside the advertising manager's office. Nearer than he to the end of their waiting were a manufacturer of lithographs and a solicitor of advertising; farther removed were a young woman who had taken a correspondence course in ad writing, and a boy from the printer's with some special proof to be O. K'd and brought back without delay.

The door opened, and a salesman of celluloid novelties came out. The maker of lithographs went in. Now that there was but one man between him and the fateful door, Bailey's fingers began to drum more nervously on the portfolio he carried. The solicitor of advertising watched him half-tolerantly, shrewd understanding in his frank survey.

When the seller of space passed in to the buyer of space his manner changed instantly from unconscious patronage to something Bailey could not quite define; only, he inferred from it that the young man's publication was not the strongest in the world, and that he had at best but faint hope of getting business for it from the great packing firm. Still—faint hope or otherwise—the young man felt that contempt of the artist which all men but the exceptionally cultured feel, whether they admit it or not.

Bailey could tell, when the young man came out, that his call had been fruitless. Nevertheless, he looked at Bailey with the same half-amused air of patronage he had worn before being

"turned down." Nor did his failure to get what he came for seem to depress him one whit. Bailey envied him, momentarily, that india-rubber quality some degree of which a man must have or cultivate if he would go a-soliciting. And then! He became aware that he was awaited within.

He cleared his throat as he entered, and the man at the desk looked up from the letter he was reading; this was a careful habit of his, cultivated so that no one might come in and, seeing him waiting, suppose that seconds were of no value to him.

"Well?" he said briskly.

Bailey cleared his throat again. "My name is Howison," he said, "Bailey Howison, and I came to see if I couldn't sell you a picture for your next year's calendar."

Instantly the advertising manager looked uninterested. "We order or buy all those pictures from well-known men," he said, "their reputation is a part of the ad."

"I know," faltered Bailey, "but I thought I'd try. You see, this is something different——" And he began to untie his portfolio.

"We don't want anything different," the manager promptly replied. "We've found out what our public want, and we keep giving it to 'em."

Bailey hesitated in his fumbling with the string. "Then it's no use to show you?" he began.

The other man—he was a young man, too—shook his head. Then, moved by an impulse obviously compassionate, he asked, as Bailey began to retie his string:

"What you got? Children?"

"No; landscape."

Bailey could feel the scorn of his senselessness battling, in that other man, with the pity of his helplessness in a hard world. Lord! It was tough—being a pathetic object to this clever, successful man of like years with his own! And he must be strikingly “out of it” if he could thus quickly arrest the gentleness in this brisk man, hardened in curt dismissal.

“Nobody ever——” began the other man in his accustomed manner. Then, recollecting himself: “We never use anything but pictures of women. It seems to be all the people want.”

“I know,” said Bailey. He seemed to know a great deal that was not cheering, and his voice plainly told as much.

“Queer thing, public fancy,” allowed the other man, though not with the fervor of arraignment Bailey was accustomed to on that subject from men of another sort.

Yes, Bailey could have launched into eloquence on this theme, but he forbore.

“Ever sold any advertising pictures?” asked the man of affairs.

“No; this is the first time I ever tried.” There was something in the way this admission was made that conveyed a great deal of information.

“It’s a limited field for a painter.”

“Yes, I know.”

“Let’s see what you have.”

Bailey hesitated, then untied the string, and showed his water-colors. The other man was obviously not impressed, but he did not say so. What he did say was:

“H’m! Those are nice—very nice. But a little too nice for the big public that advertising caters to, don’t you think?”

“And not ‘nice’ enough for the small public that buys paintings,” added Bailey, with bitterness. “It’s a deep hole—between two stools.”

“Yes, I guess it is. But, you know, it’s a principle of some advertisers that there’s a market for anything that’s made or can be made—if you only find it.”

“But how shall I find mine? I can’t advertise.”

“Well, not regularly, you can’t. But there are other ways—‘professional’ ways, you know.”

Bailey Howison shook his head, and began to retie his portfolio. “I’m no good at that sort of thing. I can paint a little, but I can’t ‘hawk’ worth a cent.” There was as much pride as regret in this last admission.

“‘Hawking’ is a separate science,” said the other man. “Not many producers have it; they have to hire it done for them. You ought to go into partnership——”

“Half of nothing would hardly tempt a partner,” Bailey interposed, trying to smile.

“Some partners it would—if you got one of the ‘promoting’ kind. There are men, you know, who like nothing better than to get hold of an apparently hopeless proposition and make it go with a rush. Why, one of those fellows could get people to stand with their tongues hangin’ out, on your front door-step, beggin’ for a chance to buy your pictures—sure, he could! It isn’t that there’s anything the matter with your pictures that you are—the way you are; it’s just that people don’t know they want them. You need a persuader!”

Bailey looked eagerly interested for a moment; then the light died out of his face and he shook his head despairingly.

“I guess a man who can do that’s got bigger fish to fry than he could find in the art game,” he said sardonically.

“Well, maybe; but I’ll tell you what you can do if you want to. The manager of a concern that does a lot of framing for us was telling me some great stuff the other day about ‘the art game,’ as you call it. If you feel like doing it you might go over to see him, and ask him for the address of that ‘art agent’ he was telling me about. Ask for Mr. Parkus, and tell him I sent you.”

Not because he hoped to reap any advantage from a visit to the frame factory, but because it would not seem polite to refuse after this show of un-

expected interest from a stranger, Bailey took the card proffered him and said he would go. He thanked the advertising manager, laughingly promised him a water-color "before the boom," and took his departure.

At the door of the big office building he stood for a moment, pondering, while two or three busy brokers and others who did their pondering as they ran, nearly knocked him down in their haste to get somewhere.

Then, deciding that since he had his portfolio with him he might as well go to see Mr. Parkus now, he walked north in La Salle Street for several blocks, swung himself on a west-bound car, and in fifteen minutes was facing the man he had come to see.

The factory was a big one. In addition to manufacturing hundreds of varieties of picture frames which it sold to the wholesale and retail framing trade, it did a huge business in "filled frames," of which it disposed in lots of a thousand, sometimes, to department stores and "art agents." For the "filling" it bought cheap, popular lithographs, colored photographs, and the like, but also it employed a corps of "artists" to paint originals. There was a large demand for these, and a line of them, 24 x 32 inches, on a canvas regularly stretched and ready for framing, was very popular with the trade at twenty-three dollars a hundred.

Mr. Parkus showed one of these to Bailey. "They cost us eight cents apiece," he said, "and we can hardly supply the demand for them."

Bailey gasped for astonishment. "Who buys them?" he asked.

"Oh, a good many of them go to South America, but a lot more are absorbed in our own rural communities. One of these, in a gilt frame that costs the agent about twenty-seven cents, fetches as high as twenty dollars, often, in a mining community. It's a fairish sort of profit, you see, even when you count the high selling cost."

"I should think it was a penitentiary degree of profit," commented Bailey indignantly, forgetting his manners in his righteous ire.

Mr. Parkus smiled indulgently. "Why?" he asked. "There's no law which fixes the price that may be asked for a picture; it's worth all you can get for it. Probably some of these landscapes in gilt frames come as near to being worth twenty dollars to the families that buy them, as some of Mr. Sargent's portraits, say, come to being worth twenty thousand dollars to the people that order them. The paint and canvas in these pictures of ours are worth nearly as much as the paint and canvas in 'The Gleaners,' for instance; the difference is in what you think of the painters, and some folks'd rather have one of these than a Millet. Then why is it a crime to sell these? They say Sargent can practically paint a portrait, sometimes, in fifteen minutes; that is, in fifteen minutes he can put in that part of a portrait which makes it fetch twenty thousand dollars instead of two thousand, or two hundred, or twenty. If people feel that it's right to pay him a fortune for those fifteen minutes' work, why should they think it wrong for other people, with other ideas of beauty, to pay twenty dollars for one of these?"

"But the artist doesn't get this," objected Bailey. "It's the agent."

"Well, is that very different from the way things are apportioned between you painters and the art dealers that handle your work and get you commissions? Don't they take most of the profits?"

Yes, Bailey had to admit that they did—in the case of the rising men, especially.

"Well, then?"

Bailey laughed. "How do the painters of your—job lots feel about it?" he asked.

"Perfectly satisfied! And quite scornful, for the most part, of lots of men who think themselves great artists and our painters the scum of the earth. Our painters have no expenses; they work in our factory, with our materials; and they have a certain income, regulated only by their industry; if they work hard they can make forty dollars a week. How many fellows with pink-tea

studios and European educations are sure of that much?"

Not many, Bailey opined.

"Those fellows sell an occasional picture for several hundred dollars," pursued Mr. Parkus, "but I'll bet most of them, if it wasn't for their professional pride and all that, would rather sell a picture every week, sure, for twenty-five dollars. They're figuring, though, on keeping down the number of their pictures in the hope that that will keep up the price. I guess they've forgotten some of their own idols—Rembrandt and Rubens, for instance—who painted with both hands, and signed apprentices' paintings all through the noon recess sometimes when trade was brisk."

Bailey stared at Mr. Parkus in paralyzed fascination, like a canary staring at a baleful-eyed cat. He had never heard so much heresy in the whole of his life before as he had heard this morning, and little chills of horror were running through him at the thought that such unashamed blasphemy could walk abroad unstruck by the avenging bolts of Heaven.

One may shake one's self free from that gripping paralysis, and fly away; but one is never again the same as before; the old scorn of that power is never possible again, and there has been a drain on one's will-power that is not made up for by any experience-bought knowledge of the tempter's methods.

Bailey did not really mean to use the card Mr. Parkus gave him at the conclusion of their interview, but he felt constrained by courtesy to take it. That very afternoon, though, he found himself on his way to present it—the portfolio of pictures still under his arm.

II.

Even on the threshold, Bailey hesitated. He had, somehow, a feeling that if he went in he should be lost. There was still time to turn back, he reflected. Not yet had he crossed the Rubicon that separated the earnest young men of his world hitherto—the men of great dreams and no incomes—from the men who manufactured eight-cent oil-paint-

ings for a comfortable weekly wage that enabled them to own small suburban homes, to raise sunflowers and garden truck, and—and families.

Perhaps it was the pressure of unpaid bills in his pockets that made him desperate. Perhaps it was a letter bearing a country postmark—a letter that said, among other things:

I try not to lose heart, Bailey, but sometimes I find it pretty hard. Of course, it's an old story to you that no one here believes you will ever succeed, except me. And now and then, as the waiting time stretches out so wearily, and your letters come with their bitter arraignment of the world that will not buy your pictures, I can't help wishing the dream of greatness, of art, had never come to you, and that you could have been satisfied to fill a common lot—with me.

Whatever decided him, he opened the door and walked in, as the legend on the glass bade him. The name of the man who invited the world to enter was George Augustus Galloway; the room he invited them into was a nondescript place, neither studio nor exhibition gallery; and Galloway himself, as Bailey took him in with one quick glance, was quite as nondescript.

He was a tall, stooping, sallow old man, with high cheek-bones, deep-sunken eyes, sharply aquiline features, and a black mustache and imperial, evidently dyed. He wore, to Bailey's disgust, a claret-colored velveteen coat, a flowing tie, and a velvet cap such as painters wear—in magazine pictures. He was talking to a caller when Bailey came in, and beyond a glance at the young man with the portfolio, paid him no attention for several minutes, during which Bailey took a careful inventory of the room.

To begin with, it had burlap-covered walls of an old-gold shade that made a truly excellent background for pictures. Only—there were no pictures. A lot of empty gilt frames stood around, but on the walls there was nothing but what Bailey denominated "a set piece" of tin armor and department-store assegais.

There was a battered-looking cozy corner, with a tabouret by the couch and on it a Turkish water-pipe and a

box of cigarettes. The general outlines of the corner seemed as sadly at variance with its furnishings—with the Gibson girl pillows and the cheap Smyrna rug on the floor—as the walls were with their tinware display; and suddenly it dawned upon Bailey that this room had been an artist's studio; that "the poor devil!"—Bailey had no doubt that he was a poor devil—had had to get out; and that so much of his cozy corner as was built in, along with the burlap for which he had paid on his joyous, hopeful moving in, had descended to this Galloway, who eked out the effect, as he supposed, with a few hasty purchases. Mr. Galloway was probably a man who did not incline to possess. According to Mr. Parkus, the "art agent" had been pretty much all over the world, but Bailey felt sure that he had not, in all his travels, accumulated a thing; that wherever he was set down for a time, there he scraped together a few necessities which, when departing, he managed to sell at a scandalous profit.

About the time he had reached this conclusion the door closed on Mr. Galloway's other caller and Bailey found himself genially greeted by the man he was criticizing.

The moment the art agent spoke it became apparent that he was a man who enjoyed living, who was glad he was alive and glad it was his lot in life to be an art agent. This, in Bailey's eyes, added tenfold to his culpability; to be an art agent under protest, to yield to it as a grim compromise with fate, was bad enough; but to be pleased with the calling was not less than gracelessness.

Even then, he thought he'd leave. But he reckoned without his host, who never allowed any one, buyer or seller, to leave him at that stage of the game. He saw that Bailey was "difficult," and forthwith his spirits rose. Not the necessities of fortune but the necessities of nature, had made Galloway an agent, and before he troubled to find out what Bailey wanted of him he applied himself zestfully to the task of making him want it more.

He had begun to make a little progress, when he undid it all by reminding Bailey what Turner said to the woman who complained that she never saw such sunsets as he painted. "Oh!" groaned Bailey, who had the intolerance of youth and inexperience for the trite, the twice-told, the common. "Soon he'll tell me about Whistler mixing his colors with brains; perhaps he'll even explain 'Rembrandt lighting' to me by informing me that Rembrandt was born in a mill! And then, of course, he'll tell me what Mark Twain said about Michelangelo. Persons who use one of these remarks always hasten to make use of the others."

Galloway felt himself losing ground, and redoubled his efforts—with the inevitable result, notwithstanding the way Whistler mixed his paints, that Bailey was won at last. He fell by short steps; first, interest in predicting what this man would say next; then, wonder as to what he thought of himself; when it became self-evident that he thought well of himself, his serious young judge hesitated between scorn and liking—and fell a victim to the contagion of Galloway's good nature. About thirty minutes thereafter Galloway had extracted from Bailey Howison a fairly complete autobiography—even to the letter from the waiting girl.

"Well, now, boy," cried the art agent interestedly, "your troubles are at an end! The reason the public hasn't bought your pictures is not because it doesn't want them, but because it doesn't know it wants them. You can't make 'em know that, but I can. I'll tell you something about me; I've been selling pictures to the aborigines for twenty-five years—pictures like Parkus showed you, and some others—and I'm tired of it. I've seen all the world and made every nationality of men buy pictures they thought they didn't want, till I got hold of them. I still like the game, but I want to try a new way—want a stiffer trial for my skill—to go up against something more exciting—not for the money but for the fun—savvy?"

Bailey looked startled. "No," reas-

sured Galloway, trying not to seem injured by the implication, "nothing reprehensible—of course not! but a little legitimate excitement for me, and for you, and for a lot of people who'd die of inanition if it wasn't for a few fellows like me to stir things up and make life interesting.

"Now, all you've got to do in this business is to paint water-colors. Paint anything you like—I can make 'em buy it—and every Saturday night you draw fifty dollars. How's that strike you?"

It struck Bailey pretty hard, but he tried not to say so. "I'll take it," he agreed, with some show of reluctance and condescension which tickled Galloway immensely and deceived him not a whit.

"Got the spirit of the game already, he has!" the old man chuckled delightedly when the door had closed on his new employee.

III.

"You'd better work in the factory," Galloway had said. "I'll get Parkus to fix a place for you, and as fast as you get the pictures done they can be framed up and sent down to me."

Bailey, accordingly, went to work. The sting of the factory was somewhat soothed by Galloway's cash purchase of about three score pictures Bailey had on hand—all he had, in fact, except his half-dozen treasures from which, now that prosperity was coquetting with him, he would not part; these alone should represent, some future day, "the early works of Bailey Howison," for which collectors would pay vast sums.

For the present, though, Bailey Howison was under an eclipse; while his contract with Galloway lasted he was to sign his pictures "Angelo Amati," and to date them Roma or Venezia or Scheveningen, eighteen-hundred-and-something-or-other.

"Ever been to Venice—to Holland?" Galloway asked.

No, Bailey never had.

"Oh, well, it doesn't matter. Lots of other painters have. Kind o' look over their things and get the lay o' the land.

Boats with colored sails are an awful good stunt; so are windmills."

Galloway's haste to get together a hundred paintings was urgent, so Bailey applied himself with unremitting industry for a month, and brought the number well beyond the required mark. He had said, when the bargain was made, that he thought he could do two pictures a day, and he found this easier than he had dared to hope. Moreover, it seemed less ignominious when he remembered what a fellow he knew had told him about studying portrait-painting under Chase, who made his students paint two portraits a day—painting and repainting the same subject until a likeness was struck.

"The only difference," Bailey told himself, "is that they scrape off the failures and sign only the good one; I sign them all, but my name's not involved, and Galloway says no one knows the successful from the unsuccessful, anyway, so here goes!"

The days were not very long, but they were almost uniformly bright, and he painted so steadily that when night came he was exhausted. It was several weeks before he was down-town again, and then he was startled by the change in Galloway's "studio."

The "tinware" was gone; gone were the Gibson pillows, the Smyrna rugs. In their places was what Galloway cheerfully described as "another grade of junk." There were smelly, badly worn Oriental rugs, with holes in them you could put your fist through—"picked up while I was traveling *en caravan* through Persia," Galloway explained, with a wicked twinkle; there were battered brasses and coppers—"souvenirs of my life in Russia;" there were sundry pieces of worm-eaten furniture—"worms working to order, on union-scale wages," Galloway whispered in a stage aside.

"This lamp I stole from a mosque in—say, boy, where the devil was the mosque I stole this lamp from?"

Bailey could only wonder and admire; the transformation was so complete and so skilfully accomplished.

"It's been great fun," Galloway con-

fided, "and when I get through here it'll be more fun to sell out at a profit and provide hand-made histories with everything. How d'y'e like your pictures in this richly reminiscent atmosphere?"

The old-gold walls were hung with water-colors uniformly signed "Angelo Amati," and Bailey's eyes swept the collection quite approvingly.

"Look pretty good, don't they?" Galloway asked beamingly. "And look here!"

He shoved Bailey into a seat beneath the one good light in the dim room and thrust a pamphlet and a newspaper into his hands. "Read those," he said delightedly.

The pamphlet was beautifully gotten up on the best possible imitation of hand-made paper. It contained a catalogue of one hundred and twenty-one water-color paintings by "the late Angelo Amati," which had been collected through a score of years by Mr. George Augustus Galloway. Each painting was numbered and named, and for each there was a brief account of its previous owners and the prices—always increasing—at which it had changed hands.

"Neat—eh?" said Galloway, watching with keen interest the changing expressions on Bailey's face.

The newspaper was two days old, and Bailey had read its head-lines but not its "art gossip"; it was to a column of the latter that Galloway directed his attention. The article was headed: "An Art Event Out of the Ordinary," and went on as follows:

The celebrated collector of water-colors, Mr. George Augustus Galloway, is in Chicago for a short stay, brought hither by an important sale of some of his most cherished pictures.

For thirty-five years Mr. Galloway has been a dealer in art, with a reputation extending all over Europe, and there is hardly a fine gallery in Britain or on the Continent that has not made some of its purchases through him. He is particularly noted for his prophetic qualities, and has forecast more big reputations than any other one man in his line of work. About twenty years ago, in Rome, Mr. Galloway became acquainted with the water-colors of the then quite unknown artist, Angelo Amati. Convinced, at once, that this young man's work was des-

tined to great success, Mr. Galloway began buying it, both from the artist himself and from collectors who had it and were willing to part with it at what they then thought a fancy price. Through all these years Mr. Galloway has almost never sold one of his Amatis, but has kept adding to them until now he has a superb collection. Meanwhile, the demand for Amati's pictures has grown world-wide, and Mr. Galloway has a fortune represented in that artist's work alone.

Then followed an elaborate account of "the late Amati," and of his untimely taking-off, only two years ago; and a sketch of Mr. Galloway, glowing with adjectives of the "picturesque," "interesting," "quaintly characteristic" sort.

Bailey was speechless with astonishment as he laid the paper down. Finally, "Who ever thought of all those things?" he asked wonderingly.

"I did," answered Galloway gleefully.

"But how did they get in this paper?"

"Why, I told them to the lady art editor, of course."

"And she believed you?"

"Sure, she believed me! If you could have heard me tell it *you* would have believed me."

"Could a woman be art editor of a great metropolitan daily and not know there had been no water-color artist named Amati?"

"How could she know? Contemporary artists are the hardest things on earth to keep track of or to account for, unless you've lived all your life in an atmosphere where they're constantly talked about. And this nice woman used to write the advice column and edit the recipe department and direct the 'daily hint from Paris' on her paper before they promoted her to write about art. She does pretty well, considering; has picked up the lingo astonishingly, and knows it's the caper to rave over Dutch art, and to sympathize with impressionism, and to canonize Whistler and jump on Bougereau, and burn incense before all the Barbizons and sniff at Tissot, and speak respectfully of the pre-Raphaelites and patronizingly of Doré and Munkacsy and Verestchagin, and all that. She's really

a remarkable woman, to have learned so much in so short a time. But I can see how she did it; she's so eager to learn!"

Gradually, as Galloway talked, condemnation gave place to condonation in Bailey Howison's eyes. It was not possible to sit and look at this genial man, with his childish delight in his own fabrications, and blame him as one would blame a mere vulgar liar. He was as unforbidding as a spinner of fairy-tales, as unmalevolent as P. T. Barnum.

"Now," he went on, "I've arranged to put my Amatis on sale at a fine auction room—not a regular art auction, but a place where they sell Oriental rugs and French bric-à-brac and early Italian furniture and 'genuine Delft' and 'antique' English silver, and such stuff, always labeled as from somebody-or-other's collection. All the people who like to pride themselves on their own knowledge, go to these places to buy; all the people who like to talk about having 'picked up this little thing at an auction, one day—perfectly absurd figure, don't you know!' Come down, some day when it's too dark to paint, and watch 'em 'pick'!"

"Perhaps I'd better not paint any more till you see how these go," Bailey suggested faintly.

Galloway looked at him with a deeply hurt expression on his odd face.

"Go?" he said. "Why, boy, they're as good as gone, right now. What kind of faith have you got in your promoter, anyhow?"

"This is so—so public," Bailey murmured apologetically, "it seems as if some one must surely call your bluff."

"Don't you worry, son," said the old man kindly, "the only fellows who know enough to call my bluff are so busy bluffing on their own account that they haven't time to call me. Why, this is positively the safest gold-brick game in the world! Take Corot, for instance; a man who knows something about the game has listed a total of thirty-seven thousand 'Corots' owned in this country—an excess of twenty-five thousand over all the sketches and paintings to

which Corot ever put his hand. I used to know an old fellow in Paris who had been an apprentice of Corot's, and he kept on manufacturing 'originals' after the boss died. And in New York I knew a nice young fellow who, for over two years, turned out a Corot every day, in a studio on lower Fifth Avenue. And that's only one instance! People who buy don't know the difference; they're just as happy with a bogus Corot as with a real one, so why not make 'em happy? Why limit the pride of possessing a Corot to a possible two thousand homes in America, when there are now thirty-seven thousand that rejoice to think they own one!"

Bailey listened in silence to this remarkable man, and went home pondering. In his heart, he hated the whole business as an abominable rascality; and yet— There was that about Galloway that seemed incapable of meanness; the man seemed actually to believe in the innocent humor of what he was doing. Bailey was uneasy, afraid of the possible consequences, half sorry he had ever gone into this thing; and yet— This is a queer, foolish world, it seemed, and one got small thanks for standing apart from the majority and trying to give them what one thought they ought to have, instead of what they were tickled to imagine themselves desiring.

IV.

The auctions, as Galloway had foreseen, went off superbly. Every picture in the first lot sold within two weeks, but by that time Bailey had more ready, and Galloway "adapted" them to the original catalogue.

The first time Bailey attended, he saw the auctioneer put up one of that lot of early work he had sold to Galloway before going on a salary. The catalogue described it as having been in several grand-sounding European collections and as having been "one of the artist's favorites among his works." The opening bid was one hundred and twenty-five dollars, whereupon Galloway, in his velveteen coat and cap, arose

and lifted a protesting hand. His voice was choked with feeling and his face was the embodiment of gentle reproach as he said:

"Stop! This is not a fire sale. I did not bring this collection of paintings here to be insulted. I know, sir, you intended no insult, but to me, who know the history of that picture, it really seems such. I had been told that Chicago is a recognized center of the Amati cult—that here, even more than in New York or Boston or Philadelphia, I should find instant appreciation for my treasures. This is a small picture, I'll admit, but we do not buy art by the yard, you know. Unless the bidding can start at two hundred and fifty dollars, I shall have to bid this little gem in, myself."

Accordingly, much abashed and, like Pilate, willing to justify himself, the original bidder not only doubled his opening figure, but kept at it until the gem was knocked down to him for four hundred dollars.

Bailey's eyes were round as saucers when he sought Galloway, after the auction.

"In Heaven's name," he cried, "what are you going to *do* with all your money?"

Galloway looked the delight he felt at this tribute to his genius.

"Oh, as to that," he said, "I don't know—don't care. The money's not much to me—there's so little I want that it'll buy—it's the fun of swinging this thing that pays me. Boy," he went on, "once I knew a saloon-keeper who had a reputation for robbing his patrons; they were mostly cattlemen from the far West who, when they sold their cattle and got their 'wad,' made haste to 'blow it.' 'Well,' my friend used to say, 'ain't it a lot better for me to separate them boys from that money quick, than to let 'em take a week to get rid of it? Think of the orgies of that week! Think of the damage to their constitootions! Whereas, after one night in my place, they sober up and go home. I tell you, there's more than one kind of a temperance worker an' philanthropist,' he used to say."

V.

At Christmas, Bailey went down home and married the girl. Galloway's wedding-present was a check for a thousand dollars. Bailey felt entitled to the check, and yet he was—for so supine and characterless a young man—singularly just in his acceptance of the situation. He never lost his head and fell to imagining that there was anything in his pictures the world panted to possess, nor deceived himself into thinking he could do for himself some day what Galloway was now doing in the money-making line. Rather, the whole affair had on him the opposite effect and, more than he ever had before this experience opened his eyes to the freakishness of the picture-buying public, he despaired of "going against the game," as he put it, on his own account.

He had his seasons of wishing the producer's profits were more nearly equivalent to the promoter's, but in the main he really did not feel that they should be; for Galloway was a genius, in Bailey's accounting, and he himself was—well, a good deal less. Perhaps it was the very ease with which he was able to fall into the rôle of "day-laborer in water-colors" that disabused his mind of any last, lingering germs of the genius idea. Perhaps it was the full-fed feeling consequent on fifty dollars as distinguished from nothing a week, that made him disinclined for further diet of dreams. However it was accomplished, he became a Philistine of the Philistines; only, instead of being intense, aggressive, as he had been when arrayed against Philistia, he was indifferent, entirely non-combative, satisfied to leave the whole world to its own destruction so long as it left him to his comparative ease—and his new flat.

After he and the girl were settled in their flat and had established pleasant practises of theatergoing and downtown suppers and other things which gave him as well as her immense satisfaction, Galloway went out quite often on their quiet evenings, to spend an hour or two with them. He was an

incongruous figure in the midst of their spick-and-span newness, but he seemed unaware of any incongruity, and talked fascinatingly to them about his experiences in many lands.

At first, the girl showed plainly by her manner that she thought him, in spite of all Bailey might say to the contrary, a usurper of their rightful fortune. But Galloway set himself to overcome this, with the same sincere liking for the task that he always had in meeting and surmounting prejudice. He never went to the flat without taking something for it that he knew they wanted; now it was a copper chafing-dish in which he showed the girl several Spanish ways of cooking eggs; now it was a quaint Italian coffee-pot he had found for her in a curio-shop, an odd-shaped thing of china with Talleyrand's recipe for making coffee printed around its slim top and fat middle. He gave a tea for her at the refurbished studio and presented his guests to "Mrs. Howison, the wife of one of our distinguished young artists," and everybody was very respectful, and appeared to know all about Mr. Howison's works.

One February day, before Bailey was home from the factory where the manufacture of "Amatis" was going rapidly forward, preparatory to a campaign in Pittsburg, the old man came plodding through the icy slush to the door of the Howisons' apartment. He carried an awkward bundle, which proved to contain a carved teakwood tabouret.

"Why didn't you let them send this heavy thing?" reproached the girl, when she took it from him.

"Humph!" he retorted. "When I give presents I want to *give* 'em—not let some three-dollar-a-week delivery-boy have all the fun I paid for! I want to set 'em right in front of their owners, and watch 'em untie the string and take the paper off; I want to see by the expression of their faces if they really like the thing."

They busied themselves about finding the best place for the new possession, and about what to put on it, and when she went to the kitchen to get the sim-

ple dinner, he followed, and offered to show her how a wonderful Swiss cook he once knew prepared steak for broiling, and how to compound a French dressing for salad "with five kinds of pepper in it."

"You're such a home-man, it's a pity you haven't a home of your own," she said, watching him as he moved deftly to and fro with one of her gingham aprons tied grotesquely about his waist.

For a moment he did not answer, and she feared he was offended, hurt.

"No!" he said at last, quite sharply; and again, more gently, wistfully: "No! I don't fit into the home scheme at all. I'm a vagabond, a rover, a foot-loose-and-fancy-free fellow; seems like I'm no sooner settled any place than I want to move on—always on. I'm tired of this place, right now; I want to go to a new town and try a new game on new people. I don't know what's in my blood, but I keep wanting to make people do things they think they don't want to do—to make them want to do things nobody else can make them want to do. I suppose if I had a wife and family, I couldn't resist trying to sell them something they didn't want, at a price I couldn't afford to have them pay! Sure, I would!" he repeated, kindling with delight in this whimsical conception. "I'd go to the door some day and sell 'em a masterpiece, just to see if I could! And they'd buy it—yes, they would! And then I'd never be interested in them any more, because I'd know I could do it, and I'd be wandering away and—and looking for a new family to try it on!"

There was something so tragic, even in his conscious absurdity, that the girl did not laugh.

"Well," she said, after a brief pause, "you've never tried to sell *me* anything!"

"No," he granted her, "but I've often wondered if I could. If I could sell you an Amati, now, I believe I could die happy."

Then they both laughed. "Suppose you agree to stay here till you've done it?" she said affectionately.

And he said he would. They heard

Bailey's key in the front door, as he promised, and he cautioned her against telling of their bargain.

VI.

The auctions of Amatis stopped at a discreet time, but for some weeks afterward there were still a "few extra choice specimens" to be coaxed from the collector if one approached him just right in his studio. The main industry of these weeks, though, was centered in preparations for Pittsburg.

Meanwhile, oftener than not when he went to the little flat, the old man had to devote himself to the cheering of a girl all but inconsolably homesick. The novelty of her new life had worn off and the routine of it had not yet become dear because so familiar, so the days were long and full of wishfulness for far-away friends and scenes. Many a time, in the gray gloaming when the cozy lamps should have been lighted and were not, a tear-drenched little lassie would open the door for a strange-looking old man with a bag of Bermuda onions in his hand, a can of Spanish peppers protruding from one coat pocket, and an earthen casserole under his arm.

It was about this time that, one day when Bailey was at work, the old man appeared in the factory and sat for a while in what Bailey called his "packing-box," watching him work.

"Tell you what I want you to paint for me, boy," he said presently. "How are you about painting from memory?"

"Depends on the memory," Bailey returned, parrying.

"Well, now, take the old home, for instance—your old home. Could you paint it?"

"Sure!"

"How about the girl's?"

"Easy!"

"Then I want you to paint hers for me. It's to be a surprise for her—I think it'll help her through some o' these homesick days. But it's to be a surprise, mind you!"

Bailey was delighted to do this, and the next day, the painting, unsigned,

was delivered to Galloway, charmingly framed and ready for hanging.

On the day following, Mrs. Howison accepted an invitation to pour tea for some people who were coming to the studio to look at some of the "extra choice" Amatis.

No one but Galloway was there when she arrived, and they chatted happily for fifteen minutes or so. Most of the Amatis were gone from the old-gold walls, and she asked him jokingly which of those remaining he thought he could consent to part with that afternoon.

Well, he thought he might give up that gem of the Grand Canal, if the inducement were sufficient.

"Tisn't as if the subject were inaccessible and couldn't be painted again," he murmured mischievously.

Then, "I'll tell you what I am going to do—or try to do," he said, as if suddenly remembering. "A boy I know—a struggling young artist—has heard of my success with these Amati pictures and has sent me one of his to see if I can't sell it for him. Even the sale of one picture for a modest price would be a big lift to him, he says. And if I can sell it, maybe I can sell others for him. See here! Pretty little thing, isn't it?"

He withdrew the picture from its wrappings and held it in a good light for her to see.

"Why!" she cried, gasping with surprise. "Why! Where does your friend live?"

"In—in—why, he's in Chicago, right now, but I believe he used to live somewhere in Ohio."

"I knew it—he must have lived near Cloverstown, or been in it, some time! For that's, why"—weeping and laughing all at once—"that's just a perfect picture of my old home! Yes, sir, the catalpa-trees in the side yard, and the trumpet-vine over the front piazza where—where Bailey and I—and—and all! I never saw anything like it!"

"Well," said Galloway, "isn't that strange? And it really looks like it?"

"Like it? Why, it is it! I'm sure it is. I wish Bailey could see it."

"He can, of course he can, unless it goes this afternoon."

"Oh, do you suppose it will? I hate to think of anybody buying it. Why, what would anybody want with a picture of my house?"

"Oh, it's an art study, you know—a kind of an ideal house that might have been anybody's home."

She was crying now, but with excitement, not with bitterness. "I know!" she said suddenly, her eyes shining with tears and with the delight of a beautiful idea. "I'm going to buy it and surprise Bailey! I can! I have some money. How much," anxiously, "do you think I'd have to pay?"

"Well, now, that's left to me, but considering the circumstances, I think my friend would be willing to let you have it cheap—say fifty dollars? I could make it up to him some other time, on another picture."

"Oh, you're so good!" she cried. "And I can pay you right now, and take it home with me if—if you'll please look the other way for a minute."

"Certainly; I'll be wrapping it up," he said gallantly.

"Would you mind very much if I didn't wait to make any tea?" she asked, when the money was paid and receipted for. "I am so afraid Bailey'll get home before I have it hung."

"Certainly, dear child, certainly. Run along. I wish I could see Bailey when he sees it!"

"I wish you could," she echoed, but not very convincingly. Evidently she wanted no third party at that love-feast. And he couldn't blame her.

"Good night, child," he said, at the door. "Good night." And he drooped his lean, withered old face and kissed the quivering, excited little hand that held the picture by its stout wrapping-string.

The next morning, when Bailey was still laughing at her for her "Amati" and hugging her for her wobegoneness after her triumph, there came a letter from Galloway, to her. It ran as follows:

DEAR CHILD: Well, I've done it! And now I want to move on. Tell Bailey I've decided not to go to Pittsburg—there's no fun in any more Amatis. I must think up something new to keep me interested a while longer—just a little while, now. He's welcome to the pictures in hand, and to sign 'em and sell 'em—if he can; and to the studio fixings, and the use of the room till the lease expires. I'd kind of like to stay and sell 'em at a whopping profit, but I guess I won't. I don't care for the profit, but I'd like the fun. Instead, though, I'm going to pack my little, sole-leather trunk, to-night, and put it on a cab, and drive to the station—some station—and buy a ticket for somewhere—anywhere—and begin again. I'm sending you back your fifty dollars, and some more. I don't need it, and you two children may, before you've learned to play the game of life alone. Good luck to you! And don't think too hard of me. I've never done a mean thing yet—as I understand meanness. I shall think often of you, and of your happy little home. You may never be prosperous, you two, but you'll be happy, and that's better; and the two hardly ever go together, that I can find. I shall always prosper. Perhaps, some day, somewhere, when we meet again, I shall be happy, too, and you shall be prosperous.



NOVEMBER

NOVEMBER lights her burning trail,
Where summer flowers have died;
And sacrificial fires gleam
Upon the mountainside.

The pungent smoke of gathered leaves
Drifts on the autumn breeze;
Weaving a melancholy veil
About the dying trees.

TORRANCE BENJAMIN.

MIMI of the MIRACLES

By Will Levington Comfort



MIMI lived in the Minimasacuma-cho, which is a street in the Shiba district of Tokio. She was American; a frail, young, dark-eyed lady, long from the States, but little known in Japan; little more than known, in fact, at the American legation. Mimi painted, one after another, the most exquisite Japanese studies and sketches, mailing them back to New York where they remained to be multiplied by mechanical means. She sold with ridiculous regularity now, and was contrary enough to believe that her work was not so good as formerly. It was her opinion that money-plenty puts fat in the back of one's head where flying fibers were—that there is nothing so sordid as success.

"The real immensity of the game," she was wont to sigh, "is when you break the seal of a publisher's letter to learn if you may dine or not."

Mimi hastily put down her little red brush. The creak of a sliding papered window across the street had called her eyes. Yes, it was the window of the Sleepless Creature! He stood there and yawned in the pristine flashing morning—a Japanese morning where mornings are lit with divinity. Also he puffed at his pipe, and Mimi was sure that he had not eaten.

"He looks huge and tired and wise," she reflected. "I could paint him, but a big sad 'Merican man looking out of a Japanese inn-window wouldn't mean anything, except to me—wouldn't

go with anything. Still, I *could* paint him!"

She considered the matter some minutes, watching the man meanwhile.

"He might go away before I had finished," she added doubtfully, "or he might stop posing in the window like this, or there mightn't be any more such work-mornings, or I might meet him and find him commonplace like the rest. That would spoil any picture!"

Thoughts always came to Mimi in this fashion, rushed down upon the matter at hand from seven different angles at the same time. "I will paint him," her mind drummed on, "just for myself! He'll be my luxury, because I can't sell him. I hope he doesn't comb his hair! He looks like an old lion, a sorry lion, bulky and tousled, a lion that has learned every secret of the jungle and is tired of them all—tired of blood and lairs, of whelps and killings, tired of everything but the stars! I wonder what time of day he does comb his hair? Presently he will put on his hat and I shall never know. Dearie me, how honestly he smokes!"

Her mind was made up, yet she did not begin at once. It was delicious to dream out the picture, so colorfully and finished as now, and yet to disclaim the tools of expression—a high moment, indeed. The weeks of essential toil seemed all an illusion. She thought of the picture being done, true to her inner consciousness, all in one splendid passionate hour.

The American in the window opposite arose, stepped back into his room.

"Wouldn't it be wonderful if I should come to know him—and he shouldn't

prove disappointing—like the rest?" Mimi murmured. She shivered and bent over her brazier though the morning was sweetly warm. "God pity poor little Mimi if she ever fell in love with a man! It would be a miracle."

The Sleepless Creature had lived opposite for a week. He was writing a book or something, Mimi conjectured. He toiled as only a man can toil who has an unhurt brain, and who can forget that this brain is attached to a body. His typewriter had come to be a part of the night-sounds of the Minimasacumacho, akin to the droning calls and beating sticks of the blind masseurs. He was accustomed to walk out with his pipe in the mornings. Once she passed him in her rickshaw near the Shiba temple. He was in the graveyard of the Forty-seven Ronins, meditating apparently. He didn't look at her, but smoked gravely among the tombs.

She could have found out all about him in an hour at the legation, at the Imperial Hotel, or from his servants through her own, but she was afraid—afraid lest her illusions be broken before the picture was done. Her work was coming on apace. Days of glorious light endured. He posed mornings, in the only perfect way to pose, unconsciously, and Mimi had a glow in her brain as she neared the end. She drank much tea, tasted little flesh, slept fewer hours, and it was a sort of strained sleep that moved with dream events. All these were signs that her work was good and big, and burning up more tissue daily than she was building.

II.

His name was Buldo. Purely by accident Mimi met him. They came face to face at the American legation, and in the intensity of the moment were introduced by the secretary to the envoy extraordinary, who was not so in the least. Passing out into the road together, Mimi was resigned, scarcely hopeful. She had never been impelled to paint the white men she had known. Buldo smoked and forgot to mention it.

"You didn't know that I was a neighbor of yours," she said. "I have heard you working furiously o' nights. That's the right way to work. You can never work that way when you are famous. I think Nature loses all interest in a man who has won—and knows it! At least," she added doubtfully, it having occurred to her that the man might already have won his way, "it is hard for one to keep his grand sweeps of emotion when one's meals are always ready and flunkies are ever at hand."

He looked down at her queerly and ignored the whole matter. "So you've been a long time in Japan—and alone?" he observed curiously.

"Yes—years."

"What for?"

"I paint."

"Are you going to stay here always and paint?"

"It is just as I feel," she answered. "Sometimes I think I should never be happy back there again—I mean in the States. Besides New York seems to think I can't do anything but Japanese sketches."

"Then you have won in a way, I take it?"

"That's just it. I have won in a way."

He had an imperious fashion of dragging out facts from her and of refraining to divulge anything regarding himself, save that he was a correspondent; still they prospered together as grown-ups should—like little children. Within an hour he was sitting in her studio, and Mimi was telling him things quite amazingly.

"I have always been alone," she was saying. "I think I must be intensely strange in some way, possibly psychic, because I dream so many things and because they remain so vividly afterward." The picture she meant to put into words came clearer than ever before to her mind with Buldo in the room. "I have always been alone," she added raptly. "Once when I was so little that I couldn't talk plainly—so little that you might have balanced me in your hand—my sister came to

me saying that my mother was dead. It was in the midst of the night. My sister was a big hysterical girl. She roused me from sleep and screamed it in the dark—then went away again. This was in the winter-time. They sent me away up into Canada to a farmhouse there—when all was done at home.

"I remember the deep snow and the gray sky and the nights. All around the farm there was what they called a 'pine-slashing'—stumps and naked burned trunks, pointing straight up like black skeleton fingers. It cut the wind into ribbons and made a constant moaning. And, oh, the nights were eternal! I was in a broad cold room, in that great creaking house, filled with hard-breathing men. I was all alone, and I wore out all my fears there, until at last I had no fears, only dreams that came in the night and lived with me all day. I was not afraid, but the nights left me strange and different—so that I was never young afterward."

"I didn't hear what that young chap at the legation said your name was," Buldo remarked softly. "You make me think wonderful things. Won't you tell me more?"

Mimi talked on in an intent jerky way. The man made her see clearly the things she described. She had been silent long, and there was a sense of emancipation in speaking to him.

She told how she had starved in Japan while waiting to get the decision from her first picture. In the last how, before the mail was delivered, it was borne to her that she did not care—the apathy that begins death. There was no pain after that, she said; nor any great joy when she opened the letter to find that she had won.

"Why, Mr. Buldo," she exclaimed in a sudden startled way, "I haven't told these things to a living soul before, and I've only known you—"

"Haven't you ever known a man?" Buldo inquired. His voice was dull, as if the woman had exhausted his emotions.

Mimi shook her head. "I shouldn't have wanted a man's help," she said.

He arose. "You have carried me off my feet," he declared briefly at the door. "I didn't know that there was anybody like you in the world. You've blown clear inside of me a big range of mountains that have always been covered with mists before. I'm going across the street to think."

She did not see him again that afternoon. A misty rain fell in the night, and she heard his typewriter drumming across the open. It seemed to Mimi as if a lid was lifted from the top of her skull—as if every click of the keys fell upon her bare ganglion. She did not want to sleep. She felt that given sunlight she could breathe upon it and a masterpiece would be created. Her every vein was dilated; her every sense exquisitely animate, every lamp of her being radiant. She seemed a queenly cosmos swinging in the orb of Alcione himself.

III.

Mimi led him early to the suburb, Kameido, where the wistaria gardens are. It became the tryst. Mimi insisted on meeting him there once—when they might have hailed each other across the street and gone thither hand in hand. Upon the top of a knoll in Kameido, there is a little tea-house that was once a temple; and by the side of the temple is a great old camphor-wood-tree with a round bamboo table on the turf beneath; and all about everywhere was the wistaria like fallen handfuls of summer sky.

It was the fifth day after their meeting at the legation. For hours they had sat among the blue blooms at the little round table, worshipping each other without words. They drank *ko-cha* now, the black tea of China, with Olympian inspiration and the supreme fragrance of that ancient soil in its leaves. The perfumed dusk thickened between their eyes, Mimi's teacup, her face, and her bare arm were marvels of pallor in the young night; and Mimi's eyes were part of the night itself—part of the flood of purple and diamonds which had swept into space.

"I've been on the point of telling you all afternoon," he said, "and now I can't put it off any longer. You know I came here to cover the war for a weekly journal. I expected to take the field with the Japanese at once, but they prevented that, and have held us here for months. With five other correspondents, all of them staying at the Imperial, I was assigned to follow the Second Army. The word that we have prayed for and agonized for all this time, came from the war-office this morning. We are ordered to take the train for Sasebo to-morrow morning—there to be shipped to that part of Manchuria or Korea where the Second Army is."

The film of white which was Mimi's cup and arm slowly left her lips and settled to the table without a sound. Then Mimi arose, not a breath from her, and slipped away into the dark. Buldo paid the man and followed. She was at the temple gate, already in her rickshaw. The coolie runners cannot be paid to travel side by side, even on a broad road, because it pains the monkey-mind for two to lead where one may follow. So there was no speech in the hour of their return. At the door of her house, Buldo turned to lift her out.

"May I not come in?" he whispered. "I have been doing a little story which I thought I should like to read to you to-night."

"Yes, come in, but don't read yet. Don't light the lamps yet!"

Her voice was like that of a spirit. They sat down in the dark together.

Fully fifteen minutes passed, tense crippling minutes, terrible with the grinding of human forces. Then Mimi spoke, low but clearly. He lit the lamp. Her face was calm, but her eyes had a drained look. Buldo began to read.

All that she had dreamed the man to be was in his work—a harmony of talents and the pure one-pointed direction of a man apart from the complicated lives of modern men. He had a mind full of virginities, free from taints and strategies and scar-tissue. His thoughts had the firm delicacy of

the strong, and some of his thoughts had ripened in mystic suns and rains. Yet a seething ardor warmed his story, and it was hers—all for her—all turned to Mimi.

Buldo read on. The two were alone in the world. His story was the story of their meeting, of their walks and talks, of the five pearls their days had been—of the present hour. The story passed on into their days to come. There came a red page in which the war entered and shook the planet with its monster engines. The war was around them—around the man and woman of the tale. It beat down upon them like a storm upon a garden.

He pictured her. Before her own inner eyes, she arose in the story as one healed and made whole by their love—as one who had become to him the fairest fruition of Mother Earth. They did not talk of love, these two in the story, they did not ask each other if they loved! All else was illusion—words, substance, their own brimming veins, the world and the stars—all was illusion save this love! They had found each other. They needed not words.

He halted in the midst of a sentence. "I couldn't finish it, Mimi," he said strangely.

"I have done a story, too," she whispered at last. "Neither is my story quite finished, but I will show it to you."

She arranged the lamp, drew up the easel, and uncovered it; then watched him for a moment of Promethean torture. The light was ill. She feared that he did not know, but she was wrong. Buldo-san turned to her with a queer sentence.

"You knew me then before—before we met at the legation?"

The lamp was banished and soft night winds came in to pet them. Silences grew long. The man spoke at last sharply, in a tone almost frightened:

"Shall I go to-morrow?"

Mimi looked up with frantic eyes.

"Shall I go to-morrow?" he repeated.

"You would leave it to me—oh, don't!" she implored. "Don't ask me! Don't trust me to decide!"

"Shall I go to-morrow?"

"Hear me!" she cried. "I have always been alone. I told you—always alone until now! Don't make me say that—"

"Mimi, shall I go to-morrow?"

She caught his hand and led him to a little court by the side door where there were flowers and running water. "I must breathe," she murmured.

They stood together under the soothing stars.

"Yes, go," she said hoarsely. "Go, to-morrow, and if to-night I should scream across the street—that you must not go—don't hear me! Yes, you must go! Wait!"

She ran indoors for her scissors, and standing before him snipped from her temple a large lock of hair, tied it with a strand of its own, and thrust it into his hands.

It was light, living, warm like a bird in his palm.

"For you—it is yours," she whispered. "You—you have *looked* at it!"

IV.

Early in September, Japan was burning with war-lust from end to end. Yalu, Nanshan, and Telissu had been won. Togo was a red demon in smoky crashing seas. Japan was back in the youth of the world, whetted of tooth, talon-fingered, blood-mad. Her fighting force, the most formidable mass that ever formed on the planet's curve, was breaking the Russian square at Liaoyang. Tokio sang with tension, like wires stretched tight—a high-pitched, blood-hungry song like insects in the night.

The fourth day of the battle, Mimi came in from the streets in the dusk. Mimi was ill, her throat parched with waiting, her face white with waiting. The founts of her life were dry, her heart thralled in famine. Buldo was away at Liaoyang, and Mimi's soul was with him, but the pitiful body of the woman trembled in the street before her own door, trembled in the dusk of the city that had come to be

as loathsome to her as a gorging reptile.

Mimi knew the language. She had heard the women whispering to their men-children—the laughing, childlike women of Japan in whom the transient foreigners delight. They were more horrible far than the increment of a battle lying in the night and rain. It was as if she had heard the yammering of tigresses in the jungle-dark.

Mimi faltered before the door of her studio. She was afraid. It was darker within. At last she entered. There, among the densest shadows, he sat—there, by the easel, in the low frail chair he loved. He was smiling at her, a white and a weary smile. His long haggard hands were locked above his head; his lean limbs stretched out in tired fashion, the puttee leggings worn dull from the saddle-fenders; his chest gaunt, the leather belt pulled tight.

Mimi sank to her knees before the empty chair, her face, her arms in the seat where the mists of a man had been.

"You are intensely psychic," the English doctor said. "This vision, as you call it, means nothing in itself, but it signifies that you are on the verge of a nervous breakdown. You must cease all worry and work, eat plenty of meat, and take long walks."

"No, it does not mean that your lover is dead," said Asia, through the lips of an old Buddhist priest. "He was likely sleeping, dreaming of you, when the strength of your desire rose to the point of calling his spirit to your studio for an instant."

Yet Mimi was deathly afraid.

Two days afterward, peans of victory screamed across the city. Liaoyang was won. Liaoyang had been entered. There were no tears in Tokio, but insensate exulting. The dead of a victory are not mourned.

The days were seven after that. Only in the sense that she did not die, Mimi lived them, moved about her house in daylight and lamplight, without work and without words. Then news was brought from the Imperial Hotel that two of the correspondents, Beech and

Harrigan, of the Second Japanese Army, had come in from Liaoyang. It was evening when this word came, and Mimi sped forth, hatless, collarless. Overtaking a rickshaw and coolie on the Shiba road, she leaped in and bade him run faster, faster. At the hotel gate she left the vehicle and hurried through the fragrant grounds.

Beech and Harrigan were absorbing whiffs of civilization in the billiard-room. They were blackened men, and tense-handed, from the saddle and the sun. The war was warm still in their eyes. They talked Liaoyang between billiard-shots, and a group of foreigners listened.

Mimi burst in upon them—Mimi of the love miracle. She was indescribable altogether—half a torrent, half a spirit. The souls of the men divined her story immediately, but their brains were slower. And their eyes were startled by this frail white creature in a dark silk waist, unfastened at the throat; her black hair dressed and wound seemingly by Mother Nature's winds; her face refined in the whitest fires of earth; her eyes like twin suns behind smoked glass, and her lips—her lips like the mother of a Prophet.

"Forgive me for rushing in here," she gasped, halting before Harrigan, "but I had to come—to ask about Mr. Buldo!"

Her voice thrilled little Beech especially. The woman who loved Beech was across the world in a grove of baby Beeches.

"Why, Buldo—splendid man, Buldo," said Harrigan nervously.

"I know that," cried the woman. "But is he alive?"

"Alive—of course, alive!" broke in Beech, who was first to perceive that her heart hung for the words.

"There is no news to the contrary, I'm glad to say," Harrigan declared. "You know, about ten days ago, Buldo shook our Japanese guard, as we all should have done, and went down into the fire-pits of the battle where the real fronts were goring each other."

"I haven't heard anything," Mimi

whispered. "There have been no letters for weeks."

"We would have heard it—if Buldo were hurt," Beech hastened to say. "And as I remember, Buldo said he was coming in after the battle."

"Yes, yes," Mimi panted.

"The fact is," Harrigan added, more deliberately, "there is small chance that the Japanese will let him take the field again—after that rousing coup of his. He broke away, you know—saw the real stuff. The Japanese think he has seen too much."

"He ought to be here in a day or two," Beech enjoined, his eyes fixed in hungry contemplation upon the woman's face. "There are two trains daily in from Sasebo, morning and night; and hospital and troop ships are crowding across the Japan Sea. We made exceptionally quick time—Harrigan and I."

"Oh, you are both so good to me! I thank you!" Mimi exclaimed suddenly, and was gone.

Beech and Harrigan stared at each other—men of starving hearts.

"Let us drink," they said, drawing apart.

And presently when they had drunk in silence, Harrigan looked down in deep trouble into his companion's sterling countenance.

"Beech," he said, "you knew only what I knew—that Buldo hasn't been seen nor heard of since the second day of the battle. You told her he wasn't hurt—and that he would be here—"

"I couldn't help it," said the little man. "The light looked to be dying out of her eyes! The words were tranced out of me. I wasn't myself when I looked at her. Mother of God, how marvelous is woman!"

"I'll help you pray that what you said comes true," said Harrigan.

Mimi sped out into the dark, driving away the rickshaw coolie who had brought her over. She wanted none of him, but must needs use her limbs, her lips, her mind.

Buldo-san was not dead. He was on his way home to her. They would not

let him go back. She would sit at his knees and hear how Nippon brown merged into Russian gray and flowed red.

So she hastened along, her heart brimming, and the coolie trailed behind with mutterings. He was paid, paid well, but he could not understand why any sane white woman should ride one way and walk the other.

A half-grown moon whitened the roofs and roads and dimmed the stars. Somewhere a samisen played. Somewhere a child laughed. Tokio, drained of her best and bravest blood, drowsed and brooded of Empire. A vehicle dashed at top speed across the Shibaku ahead, a discord in its grinding wheels. Running, lingering, in a passion of dreams, Mimi made her way out the broad road. There was thrilling warmth, as of a new life in her breast, and her lips were full and parted to the night.

Into the Minimasacuma-cho she turned, and saw the faint light in her studio window. She had left the lamp

burning, but the wick low. Always, since that night a week ago, she had needed her lamps, as a child left alone.

The door was open. Had she left it so? Coldness touched her flesh. Her head seemed rising, her limbs sinking. She looked in. There, as before, in the corner by the easel, where the shadows were thick from the low-turned lamp—he was sitting.

She fell to the threshold.

Mimi was lifted. It seemed to her that she was borne high, higher, up into the spaces crowded with stars, but her brain was repeating the words of the old Buddhist sage: "No, it does not mean that your lover is dead!" And it seemed, too, that a friendly little star came forth to meet her, touched her lips, and left them scarlet, burning.

She felt the lean hard arms of flesh at last; and when she opened her eyes, Buldo's face was bending over hers, shutting out the light. Their eyes were wedded, and he was whispering, "Miriam," and yet again, "Miriam."



CLARISSA

I TOOK Clarissa for a walk,
Of love I much desired to talk;
She let me,
The witching beauty of her face,
Her look, her tone, her charm, her grace,
Upset me.

I wondered would she understand,
And finally I took her hand;
She let me,
She cast on me the sweetest smiles,
And straightway all of Cupid's wiles
Beset me.

When finally I craved the bliss
Of sipping from her lips a kiss,
She let me,
She now prefers a grim dragoon!
How could the fickle flirt so soon
Forget me?

HAROLD SUSMAN.

AROUND THE BRIDGE TABLE



*By Arthur
Loring Bruce*



SUPPOSE that very few people have any conception of the infinite number of possible bridge hands. I have often heard men say that they have seen every known combination of cards, but I am convinced that they would be appalled to know how many combinations there are.

The following insignificant example is illuminative: There are no less than twenty-four ways in which the four aces may be placed at a bridge-table with reference to one another. This, of course, is a trifling matter, but let us now suppose that four people are playing bridge. Four hands are dealt, one to North and one to South and East and West. After the hands have been played, what is the chance that those very hands will be dealt again in exactly the same way; that is to say, that North will hold the same hand he held before as will also South and East and West?

I have heard people guess that the odds would be a million to one, but never that it would be as high as a trillion to one, and yet a trillion is not a quadrillionth of the betting odds.

This sum may be expressed, algebraically, as follows:

$$\frac{(1 \times 2 \times 3 \text{ etc.} \times 13)^3}{52 \times 51 \times 50 \text{ etc.} \times 14}$$

If we work out the above sum we will find that the mathematical probability against the same four hands being dealt to the same four players is

1,094,790,566,642,628,425,290,560,000 to one.*

Here is a number that is beyond the comprehension of the average mind. Astronomers alone can grasp the full significance of it. To play all these hands would take an eternity. Let us suppose, for instance, that 400,000,000 players, making up 100,000,000 tables, were to play ten hours every day, and ten hands every hour—a fairly rapid rate of play—it would take them over 3,000,000,000,000 centuries to complete them, without taking into account any but the first four figures of the result.

To take a rather fanciful example, let us suppose that our 400,000,000 players were to drink, each of them, a pint of water every day, it would, at this rate, take them two hundred years to drink Lake Champlain dry, so that, before finishing our imaginary bridge tournament, Lake Champlain would have been emptied over 1,500,000,000,000 times.

Bridge has made great progress in America during the last twelve months. It has invaded, seemingly, every grade of society, and has, like a devastating fever, laid low the rich and the poor, the believer and the skeptic, the proud and the humble. In Washington, the throne of empire has itself been threatened. The President has even gone so far as to say cruel and dreadful things about

*In a similar way, it will be seen that the number of possible 13-card hands may be expressed:

$$\frac{52 \times 51 \times \text{etc.} \times 14}{1 \times 2 \times \text{etc.} \times 13}$$

The result is no less a figure than 32,599,952,197.

The betting odds against holding four aces in one hand is 180 to 1.

the game. Not so the postmaster-general, however, and not so the President's secretary, for Mr. Meyer and Mr. Loeb are both expert and enthusiastic devotees of the game. Mr. Meyer is, indeed, an international player, and, in Russia, Italy, and England, his game has been for years the subject of enthusiastic comment by the natives. Indeed, his name has become linked with the game, in a manner which, though trivial, threatens to become permanent. This fact is worth a word or two of comment in passing.

A favorite play of the postmaster's, and one which he is certain to indulge in if the opportunity offers itself, is to play, let us say, a queen up to an ace, jack, ten, in dummy, and "let it ride." This, to his opponents, looks like a daring finesse against the king, while, as a matter of fact, the king is safely tucked away in the postmaster's hand.

This play, or any similar play—like the jack up to ace, king, and two low ones, while the queen is in the player's hand—has become generally known as a "George Meyer finesse," and the term threatens to become as universal as the term "Yarborough" for a hand without an honor, or as the word doubleton to denote a lead from a two-card suit.

Mr. Loeb is a master of the game, and as several of the cabinet officers are expert players there is a certain point in the President's recently quoted remark that "if this sort of thing goes on there won't be any government business transacted *at all*."

Another growing body of converts to the game are the professional gamblers. Time was when a roving, talented, and sociable pair of gamblers needed only a marked pack of cards and a knowledge of the mysteries of poker to make a handsome living on a transatlantic liner or a Chicago "limited"; but we have changed all that, and no considerable or self-respecting gambler to-day can afford to be without a thorough mastery of the intricacies of bridge.

A recent proof of this, which came under my own observation, is worth relating here, as the swindle was per-

petrated with so much daring and ease that it deceived one of the cleverest and astutest Americans of our day.

Last June Mr. Charles M. Schwab sailed for Europe on the *Kronprinzessin Cecilie*. On the second day out a certain Mr. A., a dapper, suave, and plausible young man, introduced himself to Mr. Schwab as the son of a very old—and deceased—friend of his. Mr. Schwab, who is a pattern of good nature, was, of course, delighted to make his acquaintance and was also exceedingly polite to Mr. B., the traveling companion of his new-found friend. B.—how singular is the net of Destiny!—turned out to be related to another of Mr. Schwab's friends.

Mr. A. yawned and deplored the fact that there was, apparently, no bridge on board and mildly suggested a quiet little game of double dummy before luncheon—an invitation which Mr. Schwab smilingly accepted. The points were to be fifty cents, a trifling sum for so rich a man as Mr. A. pretended to be.

Now, the whole point of this narrative is that it is actually true. Mr. Schwab is probably the best double-dummy player in America—with the possible exception of Mr. Elwell. He has played the game a great deal and is letter perfect, not only in the chances of making or leaving, but also in the art of combining his two hands.

I watched the game, from the "sidelines," for three successive mornings, and I should say that Mr. Schwab was a ten-per-cent. better player than his suave opponent. Not to make this story too long, I will simply state that Mr. Schwab lost nineteen straight rubbers. How the marvel was accomplished it would be difficult to say, but I could not fail to notice that Mr. B. was usually close beside his friend.

Occasionally, however, B. would leave the smoking-room, under some pretext or other, for a minute or two and return to his post beside Mr. A. with some hopeful little remark about the state of the weather, the proximity of a school of porpoises, or the likelihood of a good "run."

Was B. in the possession of a few extra packs of cards? Did he arrange them deftly for A.? Were the cards marked? Was A. a conjurer? These are questions which I am utterly unable to answer, but I believe that Mr. Schwab would have gone on with the game, in blind ignorance of the deception which was being played upon him, but for one preposterous error of judgment on the part of the son of his late lamented friend.

Success had apparently gone to A.'s head like wine, and he was evidently convinced that he could perpetrate *any* outrage upon the good-natured steel king. Mr. Schwab had dealt and made it a heart, with the five top honors in hearts and the four top honors in diamonds and clubs, and no spades. A. had doubled and Mr. Schwab had naturally redoubled. The farce went on until Mr. Schwab, in mild amazement, cried "enough."

Naturally, as my readers have long ago guessed, Mr. A. held the eight low hearts and the five top spades, so that he was bound to make two by cards. This was a little too much for even Mr. Schwab's good nature, and the game broke up in a strained and awkward silence.

I was so curious to discover the methods of this sharper that I challenged him to two rubbers—at much lower points—and rather expected that he would let me win, as the stakes were hardly worth his while, but I never won a game in the two rubbers which I played with him, nor did, afterward, Mr. K. or Mr. N., two "added starters" in the race to get experience. A. actually won twenty-seven straight rubbers and about two thousand three hundred dollars in cash.

Some of the passengers—one of whom testified that these same gentlemen had crossed with him about a month before in the same easterly direction—urged Mr. Schwab not to pay A. a dollar until he had very carefully looked him up, but I believe that, after a little consideration of the matter, Mr. Schwab paid him all that he had stolen from him.

I am, I must confess, grateful to A. for one thing. He taught me the best way of playing double dummy I have ever seen. The trouble with the game is the inconvenience of changing seats, looking at your adversary's dummy, leading from two sides of the board, etc., etc.

A.'s solution of these difficulties was a very simple one. The player was always to lead and never the player's dummy. For instance: I am dealing and my opponent is on my left. I look at my hand and make it and my opponent leads, unless he wishes to double, *from his own hand*, and before looking at his dummy. After his lead we lay down our dummies and proceed with the game.

If I can't make it in my own hand, I look at my dummy and make it—according to rule, that is, three aces is a compulsory no-trumper, otherwise I make it my longest suit. In case two of dummy's suits are even, I make it the suit that totals the greatest number of pips. After I have made it, in dummy, my opponent leads. The next hand my opponent will make it in his own hand and I will lead, or his dummy will make it and I will still lead from my hand.

In other words, the players always lead and never the dummies. The players alone can double and never the dummies. The players alone can deal and never the dummies. The players alone can declare no-trumps without three aces. The players must always lead before looking at their dummies.

This makes the game a very simple, rapid, and amusing one. The only thing against this method of play is that the leader is often forced to lead at a disadvantage, but, after all, the rule is as fair for one as for another, and it saves a lot of useless complications.

I trust the reader will permit me to narrate one more example of the wiles of a professional gambler, as the story is an even more picturesque one than that in which the unfortunate Mr. Schwab was the hero on the *Cecilie*.

On this particular occasion the shorn lamb, who was not protected from the

winds of misery, was Mr. H. D. Condie, the St. Louis merchant, who is a sound and careful player, and has played the game for eight years, both in this country and abroad. I will tell the story as Mr. Condie narrated it to me.

He was coming down from Mackinac to Chicago on the steamer *Northland*, and was approached by a polite young man—they are usually young and *always* polite—who asked him if he would make a fourth at bridge. Mr. Condie, not being in the humor of it, declined. The next morning, after breakfast, he asked him again, and this time Mr. Condie accepted, agreeing, however, to play only two rubbers.

They thereupon went to the stateroom of the stranger's "fat and jolly" friend, where they found two men awaiting them. Five-cent points were agreed upon, and the first rubber went against Mr. Condie by a close margin. On the second rubber he was twenty-four to nothing and one game in.

It was Mr. Condie's deal, and he was sitting west. His opponent to the left touched his arm just as the cards were being cut, and drew his attention to a passing boat alongside of them. Without suspecting any fraud, he cut the pack which was returned to him and dealt the cards. He was staggered to see what a powerful hand he had dealt himself. His cards were: The six highest diamonds; the three highest clubs; the three highest spades; and the lone king of hearts.

He promptly declared a diamond and was promptly doubled by the leader, who, in turn, was promptly redoubled by Mr. Condie. At this point, third hand exposed the eight of diamonds and asked if Mr. Condie knew that that suit, meaning diamonds, was trumps?

The dealer scanned his hand and saw that he had the six high trumps, and figured that, as third hand had one trump, the leader could not have more than six. The dealer complained, however, of the exposure, and told third hand that he did not care to see his cards and presumed that the leader did not either.

The leader, instead of doubling, of-

fered to bet Mr. Condie fifty dollars even that he would beat him to the odd trick. The bet was accepted, and the leader led the ace of hearts, capturing the dealer's lone king. As it turned out the leader's hand consisted of the six low diamonds and seven hearts to the ace, queen, jack, ten; no spades, and no clubs. Dummy went down with six spades to the jack, ten; one low heart, and six low clubs.

As a matter of course, the leader had only to go on leading his hearts in order to win the odd trick and the fifty dollars. I suppose that, as Mr. Condie's attention was called to the port-hole, a prepared pack had been deftly substituted. Imagine the horror and chagrin in the camp of the enemy if Mr. Condie, being twenty-four and suspecting that all was not well in Denmark, had declared spades and scored up a small slam, the game, and the rubber. One cannot help hoping to live until such a golden chance to confuse the wicked is spread before one.

As it was, Mr. Condie sadly paid his bet, and, with an increased respect for the wisdom of others, went on his weary way to his stateroom.

Trick, or problem, hands at bridge are sometimes very ingenious and puzzling, and I cannot forbear quoting a hand that was recently shown me and that caused me a night of agony and torment until I had finally mastered it. It bears a strong family resemblance to many other problem hands, in that the secret of it lies in forcing discards and taking advantage of the adversaries' cruel necessity for "barring" their suits.

It is, I think, quite the most perplexing and puzzling nine-card bridge problem that I have ever seen. I must, even before quoting it, apologize to my readers for the anguish which I am about to inflict upon them. I have appended, at the end of this article, the key to the puzzle; but, so difficult is it that I have seen many, many good players unable to remember the solution of it, even after it had been carefully and minutely explained to them.

Hearts are trumps. It is South's turn

to lead. South has dealt and already made four tricks. There are nine cards left in each hand, and South, after carefully examining his cards, shows them to East and West, and announces that he can make all the rest of the tricks and a grand slam. This statement is immediately challenged by East and a considerable wager is laid against South's capturing the last trick. South claims that, besides his four trumps, three aces, and a king, he can clear up an extra trick in clubs, or spades, or diamonds.

The hands were as follows:

South (the player, dealer, and leader)—Ace, king, 4, 3, 2, diamonds. Ace, 2, clubs. Ace, 2, spades.

North (dummy)—Ace, king, queen, jack, hearts. 5, 4, 3, clubs. 4, 3, spades.

East (right of dealer)—10, 9, 8, 7, 6, diamonds. 9, clubs. 10, 9, 8, spades.

West (left of dealer)—King, queen, jack, 10, clubs. King, queen, jack, spades. Queen, jack, diamonds.

I may add that South, by correct play, can always make the grand slam, no matter how cleverly East and West may defend themselves, and no matter how long they may put off the fatal play that spells their doom.

I think there is only one correct method—although the order of the tricks might be changed a little—of making all the tricks against a perfect defense, but I should be glad if my readers can point out another solution of the puzzle.

Before you lose any sleep over this troublesome enigma, you may forgive me for relating two innocent anecdotes about the game which serve to show what a strong hold it has lately taken on its devotees.

The first has to do with a very broad-minded Episcopalian bishop who is an inveterate bridger, and has even been accused of neglecting, on occasions, the spiritual needs of his flock in order that he might perfect himself in the masterly play of no-trumpers and the scientific blending of his two hands.

A Mrs. N., who was herself a great lover of the game, had gone down to the bishop's country-place to spend Sunday with him. The bishop had also

invited a married couple who were adept bridgers.

On Sunday, toward afternoon-tea time, the bishop having finished his evening service, he and his three guests were gathered around the open fire, chatting cozily over the buttered muffins. Mrs. N., who was aching for a rubber and could no longer bear the idea of the unbridged chasm before dinner, asked the bishop, pointblank, if he could not—just for once—overcome the clerical prejudice against Sunday bridge. The bishop was a widower, and his two children were busily engaged, on the hearth-rug, in reconstructing a most complicated jigsaw puzzle, while the French maid was deftly taking away the tea things. The bishop seemed much shocked by Mrs. N.'s horrifying suggestion.

"My dear Mrs. N.," he said, "if I had to consider myself alone in a matter of this sort I should perhaps feel justified, merely in order to give you pleasure, in yielding to what I am well aware is an insidious and a growing evil, but you must remember that there are others whose moral welfare is perhaps at stake, and whose spiritual paths I have always, however imperfectly, endeavored to direct. The children are with us, and Félise, my parlor-maid. What would they think of me? How could I justify the imperiling of their moral strongholds?"

In a few minutes, when the maid had vanished with the tea-tray, and when the children had been cordially embraced by their father and quite as cordially sent to bed, the worthy bishop went on with his ennobling train of thoughts.

"Yes, Mrs. N., we must try, in crises of this nature, to think of others. Now, as the children are beyond the power of disturbing us, and as Félise is doubtless setting the dinner-table, I will, if you will accept me as your partner, challenge our friends here to a few rubbers. I must, however, urge you to lock this experience in your breast, and I also beg you not to find fault with me if I make it very light, and, above all, I implore you to curb your wicked pro-

pensity to revoke, particularly at points of the game where there can be no earthly advantage in it."

The bishop then proceeded to shuffle the fifty-two allies of Satan and riffled the cards for the cut.

The other anecdote has to do with Mr. R., one of the most expert players in Boston.

A year or two ago he suddenly discovered that he had arrived at "a certain age," and deemed it time for him to marry, settle down, and gather about him those creature comforts with which Destiny had so shamefully neglected to supply him. The uncertainty of a spasmodic income, gathered at atrociously late hours, in the card-room of his club, by outplaying his fellow bridgers, had begun to wear on his nerves.

Having once fairly embarked on his quest of a helpmate, it was quite natural that his searching gaze should rest with favor upon Miss Bond, a wealthy and highly cultivated maiden of, approximately, thirty summers. Her eye-glasses, her extreme intellectuality, and her cordial dislike of bridge were certainly points against her, but her half a million in New England railway shares and her comfortable house on Beacon Street were advantages on which his fancy loved to linger.

Finally, at a "Thursday evening"—a sometimes instructive, but never hilarious, form of Boston entertainment—he made bold to broach to her the delicate subject which was mildly obsessing him.

To his no small surprise and gratification, his advances were met with a considerable degree of toleration. "But," said the learned spinster, "I cannot conceive that you are serious in this. Why! I am convinced that you do not love me with half the sincerity that you do your everlasting bridge at the Somerset Club!"

"Ah," quoted our hero, with a fine show of enthusiasm and erudition, "I could not love thee, dear, so much, loved I not honors more."

This cheerful sally appealed so irresistibly to the cultured maiden's heart—or, should we say, "brain"?—that an

intellectual *entente cordiale* was soon established which finally ripened, on both sides, into a platonic marriage.

The poor lady, since her wedding, has found her husband's love of bridge a perpetual menace and torment. I jokingly asked her, once, if she knew the necessary qualifications for a good bridge-player. She replied that she did and would put them on paper for me. The next day, to my no small amusement, I received the following communication in my morning's mail:

"In order to be an accomplished bridge-player one must possess the following attributes:

"1. A dress suit. (This does not apply to ladies.)

"2. A roll of clean bills with a rubber band encircling them.

"3. A cigarette.

"4. A stoical, bland, and unimpassioned nature.

"5. A piece of paper and a pencil.

"6. A partner, usually of the opposite sex.

"You may, with delicacy, criticize nearly every play your partner makes. She doubtless deserves it; but, as a rule, this criticism should not extend beyond her prowess as a player. Try to remember that a gentleman is one who never unintentionally insults anybody.

"Bridge should never be played seriously. One should carry on an animated conversation during the course of play. It is customary, too, to hold the cards in one hand, and some hot buttered toast in the other. Get up from the table rather frequently and telephone, receive visitors, give orders to the servants, and pour beverages. The questions, 'Who led?' 'What are trumps?' 'Is that my trick?' etc., etc., are always permissible, and lend some spirit to what otherwise might prove a dull and taxing game.

"In playing bridge with two ladies, a man should be careful to play 'highest man and highest woman.' In this way he will be playing against a man, and his chance of being recompensed for his winnings will be less remote. *Never* play with *three* ladies."

NOTE—*Solution of the nine-card heart problem, quoted in the body of this article. The italicized card wins the trick.*

Trick 1—*King diamonds*, jack, 3 clubs, 6 diamonds.

Trick 2—*Ace diamonds*, queen, 3 spades, 7 diamonds.

(If dummy discards a club here, he can easily be defeated.)

Trick 3—2 diamonds, 10 clubs, *jack hearts*, 8 diamonds.

(West would gain nothing by discarding a spade.)

Trick 4—*Queen hearts*, 8 spades, 2 clubs, jack spades.

(East cannot, of course, discard a diamond, or South, with his two aces as entries, can clean up a trick in diamonds, after ruffing one round in dummy. West would gain nothing by discarding a club. South *must* discard a club: if he discards his 2 of spades, he is beaten to a certainty.)

Trick 5—4 clubs, 9, *ace*, jack.

Trick 6—3 diamonds, queen clubs, *king hearts*, 9 diamonds.

(West would gain nothing by discarding a spade.)

Trick 7—*Ace hearts*, 9 spades, 4 diamonds, queen spades.

(This is the crucial point of the problem. If East discards his 10 of diamonds South can discard his 2 of spades and make the ace of spades and the four of diamonds. If East, however, keeps his diamond, South must, of course, throw away his 4 of diamonds. West, in the meanwhile, is in a very bad way. If he discards his king of clubs, the 5 of clubs becomes good in dummy and must be made at once. If he discards his queen of spades, North has only to go over to the ace of spades in South's hand, and follow it up by making his 2 of spades as well.)

Trick 8—4 spades, 10, *ace*, king.

Trick 9—2 *spades*, king clubs, 5 clubs, 10 diamonds.

The dealer takes all the tricks and wins his wager to score a grand slam.



MY WEALTH

MY wealth is this: The wretch of soul
When thou wert ta'en; the long control
So hardly won; contentedly
To walk alone, nor grudge Heav'n thee.

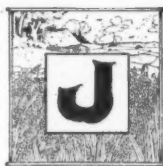
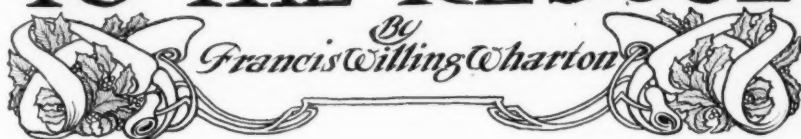
My wealth is this: One moment's space
To dwell in memory on thy face,
From all my thronged and hurried day
To clutch this memory fast away.

My wealth is this: Ne'er may I see
Thee here, but still unswervingly
My spirit leaps to thine, so I,
Exultant, time and space defy.

Though land and sea of leaf and sail
Be void, and flaming suns grow pale;
E'en though earth sink into the abyss,
I'll be with thee! My wealth is this.

ELIZABETH GRAEME BARBOUR.

TO THE RESCUE



JAMIESON had just settled himself by the fire. It was a night for one undoubtedly; a hard bitter frost had covered the pavement with a glitter of ice as he came in from his starting of a blaze in dinner, and the his small grate had granted him the first satisfaction of his day.

He was discontented with life and with himself, but not with the excellent book of travels in his hand, the bright hot glow of his Rochester lamp, the bright hot glow on his hearth—so that a knock at the door, a small unimportant knock involving his twisting about in his chair and facing the door, was far from welcome. However, he did twist in his chair and gruffly enough emitted a "come in," which reached beyond the room, for the door opened.

It opened slowly, no good news ever entered in so laggard a fashion, and in the doorway Jamieson perceived the small black-clad figure of his neighbor—if a lady who has a room two stories above you can be called a neighbor.

"Oh—er—Mrs. Bennett," said Jamieson, and reared his bulky form on its feet and, advancing to the door, pushed it wider open. "Come in, come in," he went on, with a courtesy inherent in him, which even the relentless city had not been able to destroy in its application to women. "Can I do something for you on this cold night? Come in."

She came in quickly and, as instinctively as a hungry person might approach a table spread with food, she went up to the fire and held her hands out to it. She was a small woman and did not blot out its warmth, and Jamie-

son closing the door, rolled forward the armchair opposite his own, for he had two of these luxuries.

"Sit down," he went on, and Mrs. Bennett looked a moment at the wicker chair with its comfortable cushion pushed close to the fire and sat down; Jamieson also sat down, and so they faced each other.

"Well?" He was again the one to break the silence, but his friendly smile took away any abruptness from the word.

Mrs. Bennett clasped and unclasped her small hands, clothed in black thread gloves, and then raising her head, looked straight at him with a nervous smile and yet a pair of very courageous-looking eyes above it.

"I've come," she began, "to ask if you will let me stay here for half an hour. I expect an unwelcome visitor, of whom, to tell the truth, I am a little afraid; and it seemed so cold a night to walk about the streets; I felt the cold so bitterly this afternoon coming in from work." She stopped, her young hard face seemed to stiffen as she made her plea, but her courageous eyes and lips still attempted a smile.

Jamieson rested his big hands on his big knees and leaned toward her.

"My dear young lady! Afraid!" he said slowly. "You don't look easily intimidated." He smiled a little. "What do you expect—a rat or a dun? Women rank them as equally unpleasant."

She shook her head with that attempt at a smile still answering to any lightness he might please to indulge in, still defying a slight shaking of her knees that he for the first time noticed. "No, neither a rat nor a dun, only a man who wants me to come to

the play with him," she answered, and the shaking moved up like a shudder through her.

Jamieson became quite in earnest.

"A man who wants you to come to the play with him," he repeated. "But can't you tell him you don't want to go? Can't you tell him to let you alone and mind his own business?"

The young woman before him looked at him, stared at him, startled out of her absorption in her own peculiar trouble.

"What do you think I am?" she said slowly. "A daughter of the rich? Who do you suppose guards a woman working in this city alone—the police?"

Her white-faced scorn smote him with a feeling he had tried often to escape from as he journeyed through the streets, a horrid knowledge of dangers ever present to the weak, a feeling that made him hurry home and plunge into some book to forget it. And now he struggled a little before he gave up the comfort of incredulity.

"But," he began slowly, "most people have some ties, some protectors. If—one is working in a decent place, there are the people at the office, there are friends, relations——" He stopped.

She had turned a little to the fire; its glow did not color her cheek, but she held out her hands to it as though it helped her to speak.

"Yes," she said slowly, "there are fortunate people such as you describe. I am not one of them. I came to the city to marry a man whom my father objected to my marrying, a man who in the four years before he died drained me of health, self-respect, and friends. My father died a year before my husband; he was my only near relation, the only person to whom I could have brought the pieces of my life to ask him to help me put them together. The shop where I work has a very bad reputation as to the women employed in it—but what was I to do? It was that or starve. I am secretary to one of the department heads. The other women who have done his work have had other relations with him—he keeps me, notwithstanding my peculiar

views, because I work so very hard and get so very little. Do you begin to understand why a woman like me is considered as fair game to most men?"

Her words had come rapidly. Once, when she spoke of her employer, a dull red had bruised her cheeks, but otherwise her pallor had held its own. Jamieson, who had listened with his arms folded and resting on his knees so that he leaned toward the fire, as she finished looked up at her and nodded. There was a silence between them, then he spoke.

"Go right on," he said. "Won't you? I want to hear the whole thing, and it's easier to tell it on end, don't you think so? I am not much good at questions, but I'm—I'm quite ready to help."

He gave her a grave glance which she returned with her tragic eyes which looked so straight at him that they seemed unveiled in their glance.

"There isn't much to tell," she returned. "I'd not have come to bother you, but you were so good the other day running after that umbrella of mine that blew away, and carrying up my bundle two days ago, and then I noticed your strength; you look so very powerful, as though you could handle almost any man. When I was going by your door to walk about the streets till he had come and gone, I thought of your great big strength in here, and I had a sudden impulse and knocked. It has been very good of you to let me stay. I know what a bother it is to be interrupted—you were reading?" She glanced curiously at the table with its books.

Jamieson nodded. "Yes, I read a good deal. It's a change from work. But books will keep, and your trouble won't. Tell me what kind of man makes you afraid of him—you don't look as though it was easily to be done, as I said before; I should think it a tough proposition."

She shook her head. "Oh, I'm not a coward. I can stand up to most things, I've had such hard fights, but this is different. You see"—she hesitated—"courage is all very well but—a woman—oh, it's horrible to be a woman!"

Her face changed, darkened; he stared at it and learned a new lesson in pain. "You don't understand, do you? No, how could you? But try to think of it for a moment. I can face a man, scorn him, despise him like dirt, but if he is patient and wary and bides his time, some day he may trap me and lay hands on this miserable little frame of mine and then——" She made a desperate gesture with her hands.

Jamieson uttered a kind of sound that brought her eyes to his face.

"There I can help you," he said. "I've got bone and muscle enough! Heaven! They have lain useless these last fifteen years. If you need them they are at your service."

She leaned toward him, her hands shaking as she held them out. "Do you mean it?" she said. "Oh, no, you don't mean it; and why should you—why should you get into trouble for a stranger like me? I know it's too much to ask, but it's a comfort even to think of it! To know your strength is here, just main strength equal to his."

Jamieson got up and took a couple of turns about the room, and then sat down opposite his visitor again. "Tell me," he said, "how did you come to know this man? Has he any claim upon you? Any claim whatever?"

She leaned back in her chair as though she was very tired, and unbuttoned her coat at the throat. It was a plain black coat that fitted her strong little figure neatly, and a small black hat rested on her fair hair which was braided into an orderly knot at the back of her head; yet there was something Jamieson recognized which attracted men's eyes. Something in the trig little extremities of her, in her small ankles in her worn tightly laced boots which her short skirt showed a little, and her little hands in the ugly black gloves. Her determined mouth still kept a full red curve that meant the love of life that had drawn her into her first rash step, and fortune had darkened her eyes with a plentiful supply of eyelashes and set firm dark lines above them; and thus, though white-faced, pinched, and dressed with uncompromising severity,

her small person exercised that strong influence called charm, and Jamieson, leaning back in his chair waiting for her words, was aware of it.

"I met him a year ago," she said. "His name is Haysden. He is high up in a big store, buys for them, goes abroad every spring and fall. I met him in the office of the man I work for. He had come in on business, and my boss was out and he talked to me for a moment or two. Then when my boss had come in and they had talked their matter over, he spoke to me again, made my employer present him after a fashion, laughed, was civil, told me I ought to strike for high wages. They both chaffed a little. I kept out of it as much as I could, but you can't shut up the man on whom you depend for bread and butter. And then he went. After that he met me off and on walking home, stopped and spoke and so forth, and one day asked me to spend a Sunday in the country with him, and so on. I was rather unpleasant most of the time, but he could always make that a little ridiculous with chaff and good temper; and when he talked about city politics—he is in them somehow—or the money market or what he had seen in Paris, why, I had to listen more or less. He is the kind you can't shake off, that when he gets on a woman's track is like a hound on a scent. Then he took to turning up at the place I dine, ate his dinner at his own table, and came over to mine and sat a few moments. One can't get up and scream. What can a woman do? And he looks like a gentleman and speaks like one, and——"

"Describe him a little," interposed Jamieson, because in doing so he thought he could gage her feeling for the man more completely.

She gave a shrug of distaste. "He is big, very big," she said, "as big as you are, and dark and vigorous and healthy. He has strong features and keen eyes and a greedy mouth and horrid hands." She shuddered. "While it was a question of words and looks, I stared back at him and let him know I didn't like him, but now that he has gotten a fixed

idea that he wants to get hold of me, it frightens me. He told me yesterday that he was coming to-night to take me to the play, and though I can lock my door I feared he would get it open by some trick, and then——" Again she shuddered. "Have you ever thought," she went on, "that in these horrible apartment-houses, people walk in and up to your door and there is no one to stand between. The rooms next me on my floor are empty, and——" She stopped, then added: "So, with it all, you will forgive me for coming?"

Jamieson nodded. She was more than satisfied with that nod and, drawing a big silver watch from her pocket, looked at it.

"I came in nearly half an hour ago," she said. "It's eight-thirty. I'll stay if I may a little while longer to be quite sure. And won't you—won't you please go back to your book?"

Her grave glance met his with no suggestion of anything in it but her consideration for his wishes, and he liked her delicacy.

"Thank you, I don't care to read," he answered. "I very seldom have a companion in the evening except when I go to the play or the club; I don't do either very often, both are expensive and not very remunerative." He smiled rather ruefully. "I've gotten in a kind of rut; I work, exercise, and come home and read, and I've a plan of saving my pennies for a little traveling when I get a bit older—God knows I'm getting there fast enough!"

She looked at him with a searching, interested look, free from coquetry.

"You don't look old," she said thoughtfully. "You look"—she hesitated—"not very satisfied perhaps——"

"That's quite proper," Jamieson said deliberately. "for I am in just that state of mind. Not bad enough for a revolt, but thoroughly discontented. I—I had some troubles a few years ago, disappointments—losses—and grief, and it took the starch out of me and left—well, the mediocre drudge that you see."

He stared down into the fire, looking so little what he described that she

quite forgot her overhanging cloud of trouble as she contemplated him.

He was very big certainly, heavy, too fat for perfect condition, but a most creditable showing after twenty years of work in the relentless city where exercise is bought with blood and money. His smooth-shaven face was kind and grave and full of slow changes of expression that might be watched as they came, with satisfaction—if you liked him. There was something he must lack, of course, at forty to be lonely, bored, and not necessary to the life-blood of others—she felt that—but there is so much chance against us sometimes, so many combinations of character and circumstance to trip us up in our effort to be vitally useful in this world, that merely not to lie, not to steal, not to break down the courage of others, is doing well enough, and one may be excused the rest. This woman, who had seen so much of evil, valued his honest, decent abstinence from wrong at its full worth.

Her look was so full of unconscious kindness that it had a magnetism of its own and drew his eyes from the fire. He looked up, met it, and repaid it with an answering friendliness.

"Why, you have your jacket on," he said. "How inhospitable I am! You must be roasted by this fire—can I help you?"

He stood up, but she had slipped it off and put it back of her in a moment and, taking off her hat, dropped it on the floor beside her chair.

"Thank you," she said.

"Now," went on Jamieson, "we must settle our campaign, for I must rid you of this brute. How best to do it, is the question. What suggestions have you? Physical collision is not a very satisfactory thing here in this town. There is usually a policeman to hit the wrong man on the head, and the newspapers remove what rags the police court have left of one's character. However, we can use it in the last resort, but before we come to it what would you like to have me do?"

The lines of her face had softened, let down, had become young in the

wonder of her new-found support; and as she answered she completely lost that hunted look she had worn when she had first entered the room.

"I don't know what to suggest," she began slowly. "I don't exactly like to—to——"

"Of course," said Jamieson. "Let me begin. Suppose I meet you to-morrow after your work, and if this man speaks to you you can tell him to go about his business and that I'm in charge—will he let you alone, do you think?"

A sudden color rose in her face, the first sign of a blush he had seen. It startled him, it made her suddenly young and innocent and touching.

"Would you—would you really do that?" she said, with a sort of breathless eagerness. "It might stop him off, it might—but it is too much for you to do and not fair either. You don't want them to——"

"Yes, I do," interposed Jamieson, with his slow smile. "I don't mind a little talk, except as far as you suffer. I never did care what people were pleased to say, and I'm not a boy, either, to be pulled up by my relations if I walk down the street with a woman. Now listen, when do you leave there?"

"At six o'clock." She sat upright, looking at him with her straightforward glance.

"At six? Very well, I'll turn up at six precisely and take you home. It will bring me home in plenty of time to dress, too. I dine out to-morrow. Now that is settled, and the second time our friend turns up—for we will do the same thing the day after—I will take a turn at him myself and I think he will let you alone, in fact he will have to. One thing more—is there no person respectable and female you could offer half your room to? For a week or two it would be wise and make an evening call quite another matter if he should try it, which he probably won't—but to be on the safe side."

She considered his suggestions gravely, deeply, while he gazed at her bent head with the fair hair parted and drawn plainly back.

"I can't think of a soul," she said at last. "I came here without any friends and I've made few—I could hardly call them friends. I have pleasant relations with some of the women in the shop, but they—I—well I am not better, worse perhaps, but different. My father was a doctor in a small town, and I was brought up—not as they were. He had me taught many useless things, useless when you come to earning your livelihood; they may be a pleasure to me some day, but now they merely unfit me for association with the few decent women I get a chance to see. You understand?" She looked eagerly at him, fearing to see some suspicion of her arise in his eyes, but he was bigger-minded than that, and her heart rose as she saw it.

"I understand very well," he returned, "so we must let it go for a day or two; but do you look about and some plan will occur to one of us." He rose as he spoke, and going across the room opened a small closet door.

"Do you ever nibble at odd hours?" he asked over his shoulder, with his smile lighting his face. "I do sometimes, and it comes to me that I had very little dinner and that perhaps you, too, need something after your worry. How about sausage and crackers? I haven't anything to drink. I'm sorry, but I decided a while ago it might be a temptation to a lonely man and I banished all bottles."

He came back with a German sausage on one plate, some biscuits on another, and clearing his table of books set them down. He then brought a knife, and cut the sausage into small round slices, and held out the two plates to his visitor.

"Fingers were made before forks," he murmured, with that leisurely ruminative air she found so restful, so provocative of a smile, and so unlike the world she lived in. "Come now, Mrs. Bennett, pitch in—please!"

She obeyed him, and took biscuits and sausage and ate them with a satisfaction he had been sure of when he remembered the thin cotton gloves she had slipped off before.

They discussed household shifts happily for a while, and then the sausage and the crackers being all gone and washed down with a glass of water, she rose to go and, putting on her hat and coat, held out her hand.

"Good-by," she said. "It will be all right for me to go now, and I've kept you from your book a shocking time. Good night."

Jamieson took the hand she offered him, gently pressed it, and then let it go. "Don't be in a hurry, my dear lady," he said. "I must have a hat, too, it looks more formal and respectable. Now come along if you will." He came back as he spoke from his bedroom, with his hat in his hand.

"Are you going to see me to my room?" she asked wistfully. "Are you really?"

"What did you think?" said her host. "Did you suppose that I wouldn't? Come!" And going out with her, Jamieson locked the door.

They traversed two long flights of stairs with landings leading to different apartments, and coming to the fourth floor, moved down a long dark entry to where it branched into two or three doors.

She opened one of them with her key and going in, lit the gas and gave a quick look about the place to see that no one was there. He realized just how badly frightened she had been that she had thought it possible to find any one. She turned to him.

"Good night again," she said. "I can't thank you—but you know, don't you?"

"I think I do," said Jamieson. "And remember to-morrow at six."

II.

Four days followed, in each of which Jamieson met Mrs. Bennett at the door of the big shop in which she worked and walked home with her. Three times they had seen Haysden in the distance, but he had contented himself with an ironical bow and did not approach them. On the last evening Jamieson had suggested that they should dine

together, and she had consented on condition that they dined at a place where she could afford to pay her half, which they did. Each evening he had gone up to her door at ten o'clock and asked whether she was all right, and on her assuring him she had been unmolested, he had gone down to bed.

On the fifth day he had an engagement to dine out, and leaving Mrs. Bennett at her door at six-thirty, had hurried off to dress, promising to look her up when he came in, for he should not be late.

It was a raw cold evening, but she was accustomed to the chill of her room and in a sense hardened to it, and she proceeded very cheerfully to prepare herself one of those mysterious meals that only women dignify by the name of dinner and manage somehow to live on. Hot water, even boiled over a gas-jet, will make tea-leaves draw, and bread and potted chicken may be called food, and an apple constitute dessert.

Lina Bennett was quite satisfied, however, and having set in perfect order the room that served her for every purpose, sitting-room as well as bed-chamber, she lighted a lamp on her table, and taking up her small stock of clothes fresh from the wash, began to put on the buttons that mangles are so contemptuous of, and to darn the small slits that follow in the train of whitening starches.

Her thoughts for the first time for many months were cheerful ones. Her naturally resolute character began to reassert itself and she hummed a tune as she took her long sharp scissors from a flat basket on her knee and snipped away the threads at the edge of a pair of cuffs.

It does not take much to stimulate hope in a strong healthy nature when one is only twenty-five years old, and very little rose-color added to the scene make the vistas of life stretch before one in happy hues. Remembrances that she had put behind her as apt to soften and weaken her in her hard task of maintaining herself with decency, she permitted this evening to throng her mind unchecked, and she wondered

whether borrowing one or two of Jamieson's books would seem an added liberty.

She shook her head as she thought of what a subscription to the library would cost, and then dropping her sewing in her lap, pressed her fingers to her eyes. Read? Ah, when her necessary mending was done, the evening rarely left her eyesight to read, after the long day with the ledgers and letters.

She took up her sewing and went over in her mind some of the things she had done as a girl, for she never thought of herself as a girl now, but as a driven woman whose harness was heavy on her back.

Her father had had horses to take him on his long rounds, and with an extravagance that left nothing but a pittance for his second wife when he died, he had also kept a riding-horse for his daughter. Then the skating! In this ferocious cold weather they had been having what splendid skating there must have been on the old ponds at home! Her school-days had been full of the glories of open-air life, and yet she had stood well in her classes, too; arithmetic and French; the arithmetic had indeed stood her in good stead, but the French was almost forgotten.

A sound of voices not far from her door brought her reminiscences to a full stop, and she listened with her scissors in the air, listened intently.

There were two voices, the janitor's—she recognized the soft guttural of his race, he was a fat old darky who saw little and heard less—and that other voice? Did she not know that also? Trenchant, with a little swagger to it—did she not know that also?

They were now in the room next hers. It was an odd hour to show the rooms. Sitting motionless as a statue, she listened to the dialogue within and suddenly caught the click of a key in the door that lay between her room and the next one—her washstand and a little curtain stood in front of it.

And now her blood chilled as she recognized, beyond a hope of doubt, the accents of the man whose voice had addressed her so often that winter, in

salutations half admiring, half insolent, whose jesting tones had never succeeded in rousing anything but antagonism in return.

She heard him agreeing to come back in the daytime, when he could judge of the light and exposure better, and so forth; and then their voices and footsteps died away and she was left alone again—but how differently alone!

Her room had ceased to be a refuge where she could think of the past without anguish, of the future as having at least one friend in it. It was converted into a place of danger, of immediate danger perhaps.

She sat motionless, her mind covering the possibilities rapidly. Why had he come? To really take the rooms? No—the women at the shop had told her of his having an expensive apartment somewhere. He had come to see how the doors opened and in some way to get a key to her room; but that he could not do, there were no two keys in the place alike, she had assured herself of that. Yes, but the door behind her curtain with her washstand before it? It had always been locked, but there had been no key—and what had that click meant? Only the janitor reassuring him as to his protection from his neighbor—a farce, protection for him! But why had he played that farce?

Sitting thinking, thinking, she heard another sound invade the stillness, a quick light step at her own door, then going by—in the next room—a gentle turning of a handle, her curtain pushed to one side; and standing up, grasping her sewing in a mass in her lap, Lina faced a smiling, triumphant antagonist, leaning against the door-frame, looking at her over the little washstand.

"Don't look so absurdly frightened," said Haysden. "I'm not going to rob you, my dear girl. What do you take me for? A burglar?" He stood, very nonchalant, very much amused; and in his excellently fitting evening clothes, his hat in his hand, many women would have thought him worth subduing. He had craft as well as force in his face, only any kind of fire was absent; you

might guess that he would never generously or passionately do anything to be heavily paid for, if he could help it. And the cost of things can so often be evaded in the relentless city. He was one of its special products. Equipped with every outward sign of civilized mankind, he was only hampered within by the instincts of a beast, a calculating beast with appetites various and keen.

The woman he sought leaned on the back of the little rocking-chair she had been sitting in, still grasping her work mechanically, unconscious of the long sharp scissors she still held.

"What do you want?" she said. "How did you open that door? You have no right to be here."

"I want you," was the answer, and the insolent lightness of his words fired something in her that made her know the instinct of murder. "But I only came for a friendly talk, my dear Lina. I might as well call you Lina without permission, as you won't be gracious enough to grant it to me. I came for a little friendly talk for which you don't seem inclined to find the time these days. May I come in and sit down? You have two chairs, I see."

He pushed the little stand to one side and made a movement to take the chair opposite her, but something in her stiffened form, now leaning for support against the bureau, made him change his mind, it seemed; for he remained standing, leaning against the edge of the washstand, and opened and shut his hat as he talked, his coat still over his arm.

"I guessed," he went on, "when a woman like you, with the hard sense deep in those charming gray eyes of yours, turned me down so steadily, that there was some one behind it—but you kept it so very dark!" He smiled coolly at her, enjoying her discomfiture; but, slowly changing as he talked, he grew more serious. "And I was right, wasn't I? There *is* another man. A fine-looking chap, too, I don't deny it. But, my dear girl, I know the world better than you do. That man will never spend his money on women. Don't think it, it isn't in him, he has never

done it—I know the town—and he never will. Drop him—don't play with him, there is nothing in it. Now for me, I'm a different sort altogether, Lina. Then I'm infatuated, I admit it, I'm ready for anything, I don't know what's gotten into me! Make a few demands on me, Lina, and just watch me hustle round! Be good to me and I'll be uncommon good to you."

He stopped, moved by his own eloquence, and taking her silence for something like consent, he held out his hand.

"Shake hands, won't you? Just as a beginning."

He came near her as she stood crushed against the bureau, conscious now of the sharp steel thing in her hand. She shook a little, but her voice was steady and her eyes never left his.

"I see," she said. "It's quite natural you should think of me as you do, only you are mistaken, and I'm not that kind of woman at all, and I don't intend to become so. Now go—go at once. What do you suppose any one would think who found you here and my door locked?"

His mind was as quick as hers. "What would any one think who found me here? Who would be likely to find me here? Ah!" He came closer to her, and a current of rage went through him as he felt the nearness of her little frame. "Ah!" he repeated. "You expect him, to-night, now, at this very hour! I don't wonder you were frightened at the sight of me! So you expect another man? Well, he sha'n't be the first to kiss you this evening, I promise you that, my dear."

He caught her in his arms. They struggled, and Lina, with her hand crushed against his breast, felt that he was overpowering her; she stiffened her muscles, set her teeth—it would have been so much easier with a knife—and getting her arm free, drove the scissors into his throat near the collar-bone.

Haysden gave a low roar of pain, and crushing her in his arms as though he would crack her little bones, he threw her on the bed, and staggering back to the chair near the washstand, fell on it.

It was then that some one knocked. Lina, lying breathless, almost senseless, on the bed, heard it. Haysden, his teeth set, his hand clasped on his throat, heard it also and kept silence. It was repeated, and the girl gathered all her strength and uttered what sounded at first like a wordless cry but gained by repetition.

"Come through the room next door! Come through the room next door!"

She heard dully some quick steps, and then another man had pushed aside her little curtain and stared into the room in grim wonder. With one glance of savage menace at the figure on the chair, Jamieson reached the bed and leaned over her.

"Are you hurt?"

"No," she whispered. "No, only tell him to go."

He turned to Haysden who had risen, and pouring out some water in the basin, was trying to stop the blood.

Jamieson understood it all. "You can't leave this place looking like that," he said. "Get that blood off and bind a towel tight round it, and turn up the collar of your coat. That's it, that will get you to the doctor's. Now get out!"

It was done in silence, and Haysden, with the blood washed off him and his fur collar high about his throat, looked white and shaken but cool enough. Jamieson went to the door and unlocked it.

"I'll see you to the street," he said. "This, I take it, is the end of you, you dirty blackguard, and if you hold your tongue, why, we will hold ours. Now go!"

Haysden put on his hat and walked to the door.

"I'll be even with you yet," he whispered, afraid to speak loud lest he should start the blood flowing in his wound.

Jamieson gave a short laugh.

"No, you won't," he said. "You will give it up. I will pretty much kill you next time if you don't. You have struck two fighting animals; let them alone, there is plenty of prey for jackals like you! Come!" And he closed the door behind them both.

Lina lay motionless a moment, feeling something like heaven surround her—peace. Then she tried to drag herself up and fainted.

When she came to she was lying by Jamieson's fire on some pillows and her head rested against his knee, while he poured teaspoonfuls of brandy down her throat.

She opened her eyes and looked at him. It was too much happiness—to be safe—perhaps she might endure the wonder of that thought—but safe and there—in that room of his that meant everything worth while in life to her just then—it was too much.

"Don't bother to speak," said Jamieson. "Just swallow the brandy. I got it at the drug-store across the way when I saw Mr. Haysden out. He caught a stray hansom and drove off, by the way. It's all very well having no stimulants about on principle, but in practise it does not work so well. There, is that better? You poor little brave girl!"

She opened her eyes. They thanked him so ardently that he saw the tears rising, and gently shaking his head at her, he spoke more lightly.

"You are all right. I don't know why I say poor. I've seldom seen a more capable person—you have done for Haysden, and did it all by yourself after all. He is no lion-tamer, that man! He will never come here again, and now we can think of other things. Of supper very soon, I think, don't you? The kind ladies I dined with fed me at seven, and scantily then. Brandy and water and paté. Did you know I had a paté? No, of course you didn't, but I have, and that constitutes a supper for the gods."

He laid her down on the pillows, and going to the closet door, started to open it, then stopped.

"Do you know I would like a cigarette first, if you don't mind? It won't make you feel faint again, will it? No? Well, then, I'll get a light and sit down and take it all in while you lie quietly there and warm your poor little cold self by the fire. That room of yours was like ice, and then you had a chill of another kind, didn't you?"

He lit his cigarette and sat down in his armchair. Lina slowly raised herself a little, and piling the pillows against the chair behind her, sat up. Looking round the room, she gave a sigh of content.

"By the way," said Jamieson suddenly, "I forgot your room. I must go up and lock the door and see what needs to be cleaned up. We can't have Mrs. Davis coming to do some of that spasmodic cleaning of hers, and find it upset. I'll only be a moment."

He left her, and she closed her eyes and waited—waited in a kind of numb peace. One arm ached painfully, the one she had not freed and which he had crushed so savagely against him, and she felt as weak as though she had emerged from something like death.

In a few moments he came back, and dropped her key in her lap, and stuffed a bloody towel in the fire.

"It was wonderfully neat, considering all things," Jamieson towered above her at the fire, tucking the end of the towel in with the poker and adding to the flame with some fresh kindling. "You must sleep here in my room to-night, and you will have two doors to lock if that will please you. Blagden

next door is an excellent chap, who would come in if you banged on the wall. I'll go round to the hotel for the night—then to-morrow we will find you a proper place to live, with real locks on the doors and doorkeepers and fellow boarders and other safe things."

She looked at him as he sat opposite her, puffing his cigarette.

"I can't put you to so much trouble," she said. "I don't mind going up there." She shuddered. "I will be all right, indeed I will. I can't turn you out."

"My dear child," said Jamieson, knocking the ash off his cigarette, "do you think when it has taken me twenty years to find any one who had a need for my strength and my protection, that I am going to give up my treasure-trove like that? No, I'm going to look out for you now. What the exact conditions of our contract will be we will settle later on. We have lots of time—and just now it's time for supper."

He got up, threw the end of the cigarette in the fire, and stood for one instant looking down at her. As she looked wistfully up at him out of her unflinching eyes, he thought his bargain a good one.



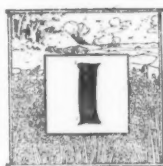
THE STARS

I SHALL walk bravely, bravely through my days.
 Though love, that flaming torch that lighted me,
 Has dropped away in darkness utterly,
 I shall not falter on these unguessed ways,
 Nor cry aloud for any spark to see
 The forward step, lest, failing, I might be
 A lost thing dazed and wailing in the haze.
 For God who gives each soul its certain light
 Will leave me not in darkness. For a space
 I may go blindly where no guidance bars;
 Yet, confident that in this torchless night,
 Sudden shall break above my upturned face
 The white, unchanging radiance of the stars.

THEODOSIA GARRISON.

OTHER MEN'S WIVES

By
Mary Keaton Vorse



SUPPOSE it was I who opened fire and caused all the trouble by saying tactlessly, when I came home and found our room occupied by a steamer-trunk, a hat-box,

and two sizable valises:

"Why, you're not going to take a trunk for this little trip, are you, Felicia?"

This was one of the questions of the nature of "Is this you?" or "Have you come?" and it was my fault when Felicia replied flippantly:

"Oh, certainly not! I merely am packing this trunk to divert myself. Time hangs so heavy on my hands now and then that I just pack and unpack a steamer-trunk and a hat-box or two to pass the hours away."

Of course, I would have done better to have followed Carrington's example. Sheeplike, he had followed me up-stairs. Carrington giggled. At the moment I saw nothing funny in Felicia's levity.

"Why, great Heavens, woman!" I exclaimed. "As I understand the itinerary prepared by Elizabeth"—that's Carrington's wife—"we're going to take the outside line to Boston, stay there two or three days, and then a boat to that place, whatever its name is, at the end of the Cape, spend a couple of days there, and perhaps motor down to Boston again, or to Fall River, and be gone a week in all!"

Here I saw Felicia lay out an evening gown of trunk and fold it carefully into the trunk; and seeing black and immaculate garments of my own

spread out with care upon the bed, "What," I asked sternly, "are those?"

"Pajamas," replied Felicia briefly, with an ear, no doubt, that was attuned to Carrington's giggle.

"If you think," said I, "that on this brief vacation I'm going to do things of that sort!"

"Oh, come, Bobby," Felicia moaned, "don't talk so like a husband! We know heaps of people in Boston."

"We're not going to see any one we know. Besides, two dress-suit cases," I persisted fatuously, knowing all the time that our luggage would number as many pieces as Felicia willed.

"Two dress-suit cases," Felicia snorted contemptuously, "would smash everything I'm going to take with me! And why," she continued, "a man needs to buzz around like a hornet while a woman is packing trunks, is more than I can fathom! And all men don't. I'm perfectly sure that Jasper"—that's Carrington—"doesn't ever drive Elizabeth to drink this way!"

Seeing the war-signals flying I retreated into my library, where Carrington had installed himself.

"Carrington," I asked, "how much luggage is Elizabeth taking along?"

"I'm sure I don't know," he replied vaguely. "She always takes as little as possible," he added.

Of course she did! Trust a splendid woman like Elizabeth Carrington for taking as little luggage as possible with her! And with it all, my heart told me that Elizabeth would look spick and span as if turned out of the proverbial bandbox, while I was equally sure that as soon as Felicia clapped a foot in Boston, she would make for a store to

purchase something she had left behind. Then, not for the first time in our friendship, as I sat there smoking, I wondered to myself why Felicia couldn't have had a touch of Elizabeth in her make-up.

There is no disloyalty in this. All men feel that way about their wives. However much a man admires his wife, he can't but see many a little way in which he could improve her—easily—if she would only listen to him without her disposition being impaired by it. But that's just the trouble; wives won't listen. That's why I thought the example of Elizabeth might prove so beneficial.

It is a curious psychological phenomenon that both men and women continue in their futile battles against the faults of their respective spouses which are as much a part of them as the shape of a nose or the color of hair. Now, I knew all about Felicia's love of superfluous baggage long before I got engaged to her. Indeed, I think I can say that few of Felicia's faults were unknown to me at the time of our marriage. Indeed, one of the reasons that Felicia and I knew why we were going to be happier than most people was because we both thoroughly realized that the other wasn't perfect. I say this so that no one need think that any remarks I may have made, or may subsequently make concerning my wife's character, are caused by any disillusionment. Quite the contrary. As I have often told her—

"As a wife, Felicia, you have panned out better than I had any reason to expect when I took the risk of marrying you. You see," I used to say, "if I expected all sorts of virtues from you which you haven't got, how awkward it would be for both of us when they failed to materialize!"

"Yes, indeed," she agreed, with enthusiasm. "Why, if I didn't see *quite* through you, Bobby, we would probably have some *terrible* hours ahead!"

"There's nothing like getting free of silly idealism," I would say, "to base a happy marriage on."

"Yes," Felicia would agree. "What,"

she would ask, in a guileless manner which to my then untutored mind conveyed merely a desire to better herself, "what should you think was my chief fault?"

Being encouraged in this manner, and thinking that perhaps I could help the child a little, I replied candidly:

"Well, you know, Felicia, that your disposition isn't of the most even. You aren't patient, Felicia," I would say judiciously.

"And what else?" Felicia would continue, in the tone of a cooing dove, which at that time completely deceived me as to her state of mind.

"I think you are indiscreet," I would continue. But it is unnecessary to go on! If you have been through it yourself and are an experienced married man, you will know how fatal such disclosures are. If you aren't, it's no use to warn you. Your Felicia, if she so wills it, will set the same sort of traps for you and lead you into them, and the result is sure to be a—shall we call it lightly a dispute?

Of course, in such an important matter as the feminine psychology, one should not argue from a single case, but I believe it to be a common trait among women that they rejoicingly confess to faults that they haven't, keeping their true faults locked securely in some dark little corner, and if you are unfortunate enough to stumble upon the key to it and open it and bring any of them out—why, blame yourself for what happens! That is no way to counteract your wife's faults.

It was because I found it was no way that I especially liked Elizabeth Carrington as a friend for Felicia. I have known and admired Elizabeth since I was a boy. She has all the qualities of a noble woman. People always instinctively call her that, while no one on earth would ever think of applying that adjective to Felicia's character. You know what I mean. Elizabeth is one of those fine, statuesque girls built a good deal like those you see on monuments representing "Patriotism" or "Motherhood," or one of those things that usually are enthroned.

She has all the qualities for a fine wife that you can think of. Personally, I should never have had the temerity to have asked Elizabeth to join her fate with mine, for I am merely an ordinary mortal; but Carrington, who, as it happens, is an old friend of Felicia's, seemed to find no such difficulty stand in his way. Although a very nice chap indeed, he's no more fitted to occupy a pedestal than I am.

Having looked up to Elizabeth and admired her for so long—and with a real admiration, for her goodness is quite unconscious and has none of the snobbery of conscious virtue—it was rather a shock to me to see such a magnificent and noble creature link her life to that of an ordinary, hard-working, every-day, common or garden variety of man.

It was, perhaps, just as well that it was so, for Carrington is a man who has very little discipline. He was an old beau of Felicia's before he became her friend—I hope you notice the subtlety of this distinction—and would have outrageously spoiled her had he married her. He would have spoiled Elizabeth, of course, if she could have been spoiled.

This was why I was so pleased when the Carringtons suggested to us the trip I have described. We met at the boat, as we had planned, I still feeling rebellious concerning the hat-boxes and the extra steamer-trunk; the more so as I felt morally certain that the small necessary objects would find themselves in the trunk, while the things we couldn't possibly need would have perversely lodged themselves in the dress-suit cases which we would take into our staterooms. Nor was my feeling of natural irritation allayed by the restraint Elizabeth had put on herself.

The next morning after our arrival in Boston, Felicia announced blithely, without batting an eyelash to show any decent feeling of shame:

"I suppose all of *you* will want to go and gaze on the historic spots? I hate them! Just point to a spot where a martyr has bled, or a tree where a general has stood, and my instinct is to

cling to the next trolley-car away from it."

"What are *you* going to do?" asked Carrington.

"Oh, nothing much," said Felicia. "I haven't a single shirt-waist I can wear; I thought I had lots of them."

"Oh, come," I said, "Felicia. Come along with us!"

"No," Felicia replied firmly, "I know perfectly well what you're going to do. You're going to see Bunker Hill Monument and other places like that, and you'll go out to Cambridge—there are ever so many elms in Cambridge that Washington chopped down, or something—and I feel as if I'd seen them all before thousands of times, whereas Boston shops seem quite different to me. I've always wondered where Boston women get their clothes."

"Oh, come, Felicia," Elizabeth urged. "I know you've always hated sight-seeing abroad, but it's different in your own country."

"No, Elizabeth," replied Felicia, with firmness, "it's not different in my own country; or if it's different it's worse."

"Aren't you even going into the Public Library?" said Elizabeth.

"If I happen to see it beckoning to me," replied Felicia. "Who knows? If it looks at me with a kindly eye and says, 'Come in, Felicia!' perhaps I may. I don't mind libraries—on principle, I mean."

"But what," asked Elizabeth, "did you come to Boston for?"

"To buy shirt-waists!" Felicia replied promptly. "I'm not like other women, Elizabeth. I'd like to be—but I can't. There's a deep voice within me that now and then whispers to me, 'Felicia, go and buy shirt-waists!' and when it speaks, no matter where I am, I have to obey. I hear that voice speaking to me this morning."

"A similar voice speaks to me," Carrington thought it suitable to announce.

"No, Jasper," said Felicia firmly, "I'm going alone. You know how you'd feel when we got home to New York and you hadn't seen any of those Washington elms."

Well, it was with this levity that Fe-

licia behaved during the two days that we remained in the hub of the universe. Whenever it came to seeing a place of interest, Felicia balked—cheerfully, but definitely—leaving Carrington and Elizabeth and me to see the sights. At the end of our stay I found that Felicia had acquired marvelous bargains during the summer sales, and had bought a new trunk to hold them. This, I will add, she had the grace to express home.

I will not deny that her attitude irritated me. It was such a striking contrast to Elizabeth's, who proved the most delightful companion and developed stores of unsuspected lore concerning the things which we all enjoyed seeing. When I told my wife of this she replied callously:

"Well, you knew before you married me, didn't you, Bobby, that I was no high-brow? I hate the sententious old goats they call heroes around here. I always was a Tory."

"Well," said I, "I think your attitude toward the institutions of your country is highly unbecoming, Felicia, if you ask me."

"That's what comes," said Felicia, with much exasperation. "of letting you associate with Elizabeth Carrington. You always get highfalutin when you do! You revert to the days of your youth—you must have been a singularly trying young man, Bobby, when you were twenty-one," she said, looking at me with speculative and unflattering eyes. "I'm thankful you got over that stage before ever I clapped an eye on you. And that's one reason why I haven't been able to go and see a *thing*, much as I might have liked it. I've always wanted to come to Boston and see the sights. When I visited here, naturally my friends weren't the people who take you around and make you look at things. We just had fun. I've always wanted to see all the things in Boston!"

"But the moment I got here and saw the way you and Elizabeth were going on, getting soulfuler and soulfuler, I just made up my mind that I *would* not be snubbed. So I kept out! And if

you think it's gay shopping alone in Boston in summer—oh, I know you wouldn't catch Elizabeth being fool enough to talk to her husband like this, no matter what she felt inside. *She* wouldn't put herself in the wrong—not she! And I know I'm a pig to talk like this about Elizabeth, who's a perfectly splendid girl; but all I have to say is, I wish you could have her for a wife, Bobby, for a few days!"

Uttering these dark words, she led the way out of the door and morosely we joined our friends at dinner.

That night my impression that Carrington hadn't enjoyed himself as he had hoped to do crystallized definitely when he began to wonder what the state of the market was, and to peruse the financial columns and abuse the Boston papers. This is always a sure sign that a man wants to get back home when he is in Boston. Furthermore, he encouraged Felicia by saying:

"Felicia knows more about Boston than any of us. She could give us cards and spades on modern Boston." To which Felicia replied cheerfully, she thought so indeed.

Next morning we were to take the boat which lands one at the town whose name I can't remember, but which is situated on the end of Cape Cod. The boat arriving there leaves from a remote part of Boston at nine o'clock. Felicia and Carrington set off in a cab together. At the last moment, I found myself delayed by a disposal of Felicia's luggage, as I did not know which trunk was to be expressed back to New York and which to accompany us on our journey, and had to call upon Elizabeth to decide.

It had been rather late when we got under way, and though our cabman urged his horses to the uttermost, when we got to the pier there, already under way, was the boat.

Hanging over the after-rail I could discern Felicia's face, sparkling with mischief, while Carrington, apparently in no such good humor as his companion, leaned lugubriously over the rail trying to shout something.

I turned to Elizabeth, light at heart.

After all, in the somewhat roving life that Felicia and I lead, losing a boat is a matter of no such great moment. A lost boat is a lost boat; and there are many pleasant ways of passing the time.

No answering spark came from my companion. She watched the retiring steamer with a face of unbroken gloom.

"It is unfortunate," she murmured, "awfully unfortunate!"

"Oh, I don't think it's so bad," I said lightly. "We'll have a pleasant little morning together, and then lunch and catch the afternoon train."

"It's a very ridiculous position to be put in," Elizabeth rejoined, with severity, "ridiculous for them and ridiculous for us! Once they arrive, they can't of course register at the same hotel, and if I only thought that Felicia or Jasper had sense enough to know—but Jasper hasn't much initiative; he doesn't think things up, he leaves them to me; and they'll probably go and have all their baggage sent right up there to the same place, and everybody in the hotel will be talking their heads off after we arrive!"

Have I mentioned that Elizabeth was conventional, and that this was one of my reasons for delighting in her as a companion to my wife? Whereas Felicia is a Nonconformist, who goes around chucking the most revered customs under the chin, or setting them gently aside in an absent-minded way, as though she weren't quite aware what she was up to.

"Now," said Elizabeth, with a return of her brisk and able manner, "let's see what's to be done!"

She spoke, it seemed to me, with more weight than the occasion demanded. Her words gave the impression that we had to face a crisis of some sort, which we must meet as serenely and cleverly as we could. I looked at her. She stood there, strong and handsome and imposing, the very woman one would pick out in an emergency, a woman of all others whom one would expect to see things in their proper perspective. Felicia is amused by the events of life as they pass one after another before her, else

she is bored. This is her simple-minded way of meeting life. Elizabeth meets life on a very different basis. She now fastened large, Junolike eyes upon me, and said:

"I've never in all my life lost a boat or a train or anything before!"

I felt the implied rebuke, the more so as I was sure that had Elizabeth been managing those trunks, the contretemps would not have occurred. *She* would not dally with the morning's paper, stopping to joke while there were trunks to be seen to—not Elizabeth! The irritation which a mere man feels when in the presence of a superior woman enveloped me. But I stifled my irritation by saying lightsomely:

"At least we can have a great old time this morning, can't we? You said yourself that you wanted to see more of Boston."

Elizabeth looked at me gravely.

"Of course it would be delightful," she palliated, in her most polite manner; but underneath the politeness there was that which showed me I had made a break. What kind of a break I couldn't fathom, but it had the effect of making me feel abysmally a fool, and it flashed through my mind that when Felicia gets angry at me and won't tell me what I've done, it isn't myself I think a fool.

Thus, with some natural irritation, I entered the cab which should convey us back to the hotel. Although Elizabeth and I conversed with an outward semblance of that mellow old friendship which is ours, yet underneath I had a guilty, sneaking feeling which I knew I had no business to have. Elizabeth had foisted it off on me. Darn the woman, anyhow! It wasn't my fault we lost the boat, merely a concurrence of unfortunate circumstances. And then, when I suggest we have a good time, she makes me feel as if I had put my foot into it. That's a pleasant way to make a man feel! And while I was replying to Elizabeth's polite remarks, I was thinking inside myself:

"Thrice blessed of woman whose husband can call her a fool! Hosannah in the highest to the engaging female

who permits herself to be put in the wrong! Oh, those thrice-blessed words which it ought to be the privilege of any man to utter to his spouse: 'For Heaven's sake, don't be such an idiot!'

Would such words ever be spoken by any man to Elizabeth? I knew they would not. She would always sail along as complacent as the full moon—Queen and Huntress!

"No," thought I, "it's a woman's duty to take the blame some time. Good Lord, what does a man get married for? Not to curl up into a nameless speck, certainly, under the accusing and searching glances of his wife."

Then I began making ratios, all under the cover of decent talk. If Elizabeth could make a man feel like this for something he hadn't done, how would she make him feel if he really were to blame?

While I meditated thus, Elizabeth's peroration on whatever it was we were talking about flowed on, urbane and charming as usual. It was only toward the end of our drive that I noticed that her stream of talk was a trifle more rapid than usual, and all of a sudden I realized that Elizabeth had not been wantonly trying to make me feel uncomfortable; she was embarrassed herself about something; and the idea of her being embarrassed was so foreign to anything I knew of her that I found myself quite blank, in the face of the unexpected turns of woman's character.

What the deuce and all was she embarrassed about?

Once arrived, Elizabeth asked for a time-table, and scarcely seemed to hear my offer to look up trains for her. Now, the Lord knows I am a broad-minded man. No one could say that I wish to tread down the other sex. Give 'em the ballot, say I. Let 'em go preaching and managing stock companies, if they can. But for Heaven's sake let them own that in the looking up of the railway train, woman is not man's equal. I have seen some handsome young Amazons from the West who handled time-tables with the same knowing air that other women do a cook-book, but

had even these ladies had their natural protectors to look up trains for them they would, I had no doubt, have cheerfully yielded up the railway guide to them.

Not Elizabeth! Indeed, from some innocent remark that she let drop, I gathered that it was she who always looked up trains. This was my second disappointment in my childhood's friend.

Had I been asked the day before if I should like to spend half a day in Boston alone with Elizabeth, I should have agreed with great alacrity; for you know how it is when you see things by threes always. Elizabeth and I have a lot of things in common in which Jasper has no share. It comes awkwardly when Elizabeth tells me what a fine, idealistic young man I used to be, if Carrington is around.

"There's a train," she announced, "which starts at two. I suppose we'd better lunch at twelve. Now," she went on briskly, "you don't need to feel you have to lunch with me, Robert. If you have anything you want to do, and prefer to meet me at the station——"

"Indeed, no," I hastened to assure my friend, shocked at the lack of chivalry with which she credited me, "I'd rather lunch with you than anything else."

It seemed to me that ever so small a flicker of disappointment played across her statuesque features.

"Isn't twelve," I went on, "a little early for lunch?"

"I think we'd best be early, if it's the same to you," she replied. It may have been only my supersensitiveness that made these innocent words hold a sting.

We lunched, accordingly, at the hour set by Elizabeth. The large dining-room of the hotel held but few people. Four tables off sat a well-groomed lady who was accompanied by three well-groomed daughters, a family en route somewhere, I made no doubt, by their traveling costumes. As I was making these idle reflections the lady looked across and bowed to Elizabeth, who returned her bow it seemed to me with a

shade of austerity. Not content with the bow, the older lady rose and glided across the room.

"How do you do, Mrs. Carrington? How perfectly charming to meet you! Are you going up the Cape, too? And where is Mr. Carrington?"

Sparkles of interrogation glittered in her somewhat near-sighted eyes.

With easy smoothness Elizabeth explained our little journey, and added that Mrs. Jeffers and her husband had become accidentally separated from us. And while she did this I saw a blush mounting to her cheek. Again I perceived that, for causes unknown to me, Elizabeth was embarrassed. Indeed, had Felicia shown such signals of distress, I should have said that I had caught her with the goods on in something she had intended me not to know. And yet, why?

"That friend of mine," Elizabeth explained, "used to be the president of our Woman's Club."

Have I mentioned that Elizabeth resides in one of the New Jersey towns near New York where, she maintains, life is more normal, and where, as I have heard her say many times, one is more part of things? Also, I was in possession of the fact that Elizabeth was herself president of the Woman's Club. It is a matter that Felicia frequently jokes her about.

I suppose you, by this time, see the plot thickening; already you grasp the meaning of the signs of distress, which I did not until we had made our way to the railway station, where I found that the train looked up by Elizabeth did not leave except on Mondays—it raised me much in my self-esteem to find she hadn't noted this in the timetable—and left us with two hours to wait.

And here, just as I was supplying Elizabeth with New York papers and magazines to pass the tedious time away the former president of the Woman's Club again joined us. She seated herself beside us, and while no mention was made of Carrington or Felicia, they hovered in the air about us. I saw the lady's eyes gleaming toward

doorways. Artfully she led the conversation to our missing spouses, while again a thousand questions glittered sparkling in her eyes. At last, however, her train mercifully called her. Gathering the young ladies about her, she sailed away. I turned to Elizabeth.

"Thank Heavens," came from her, "that woman's gone!"

And with the departure of her acquaintance Elizabeth's manner, which had held her own sure graciousness, underwent a change. It withered, so to speak, at the root, like a sappy and luxuriant vine touched with frost. She said nothing, nor did I. There was nothing to say; and it may seem very little to tell, but I can assure you that to me it was tragedy nevertheless. When a woman who has seemed to you from childhood the beau ideal of the feminine virtues shows the white feather, and for no reason, the modern man does not get up and ramp and howl. No scene is enacted that could be portrayed on the stage. The woman picks up a magazine and makes as though she would read it; the man excuses himself and goes for a smoke—as I did.

Nevertheless, tragedy had passed over. Another of life's illusions had been taken from me; for in Elizabeth's confession of weakness, in her little cry of "Thank Heaven, that woman's gone!" I had correlated all the events that I had not understood. She was afraid of talk—that was what was the matter with Elizabeth Carrington!

Well, had Elizabeth slapped me in the face I would have been far less pained—far, far less pained, and less surprised. It takes Virtue to plumb the nameless depths of human baseness. The idea of it, the disgusting and unpleasant idea of it, that Elizabeth should imagine that the stone of gossip should for so slight a cause be thrown at herself and me—at *me*, the mirror of virtuous husbands! It was really too awful.

No, my poor friend Elizabeth Carrington had fallen down with a crash from her pedestal. I looked around, and this familiar landmark among

women no longer towered above me. There came over me a just sense of the joke Felicia would have made of the whole thing—no doubt *had* been charmingly making all day! *She* wouldn't have blamed me for missing the train; *she* wouldn't have looked up the wrong time-table. She might have done other sorts of things—but there it is! The faults of your Felicia, after all, are so much more endurable than the faults of somebody else's Elizabeth.

That evening, when at the jumping-

off place, after hours of wretchedness in a slow, crawling train, Felicia and Carrington met us, Felicia, regardless of all the assisting crowd, hurled herself at me and dragged me out of hearing to say:

"Thank Heavens, you're back, Bobby! I've *never* had such a horrid day, never! What ails Jasper I don't know! He never used to be like this! Why, he's been—he's been like a hen sitting on hot-boiled eggs! I don't know what's the matter with him."



THE DREAMER

STILL marvelous the morning as of old,
 Still in pale splendor falls the eventide;
 Through velvet darkness shine the stars of gold
 Across the world so wide.

Outstripped in life's hard race, left by the way
 With other vanquished ones, a hopeless band—
 Yet have I dreams to comfort me by day
 The few can understand.

The pain of failure often I forget
 In Nature's bruising storm and silver rain;
 And voices from mid-woods call me yet
 To hear once more their pipes' long silent strain.

BETH SLATER WHITSON.



O me it always did seem absurd to put a soldier in charge of a ship. All my philosophy—and I am something of a philosopher—failed to reconcile me to work of that sort. I felt as much out of place as a navy lieutenant of my acquaintance seemed to be while trying to sit on the back of a horse that objected to his presence there.

The ship that I had been in charge of was a big, white transport, laden chiefly with crockery, glassware, and stewards—crockery and glassware for which I was responsible, and stewards to break it. Then, when we were but three days from Manila, our destination, a typhoon came along and attended to what little the stewards had overlooked by dumping it off the rackless shelves. I was obliged to make but the one voyage, however.

Redfield, my old friend, had just won his single star. Like most brigadiers, especially new ones, he preferred an independent command. His desire certainly was attained; they assigned him to Tarlaginan. At his earnest request I was appointed quartermaster-general under him, and in due time we were deposited, together with the men and stores we brought, on a strip of malodorous mud, dotted with ramshackle bamboo huts, which lay between the sea and a range of hills.

Save that Tarlaginan lay on the landward side of these hills; that it already

was a military post of some importance which, with the reinforcements that came with us, would become still more so, and that Redfield's old regiment was stationed there—except for these facts, I say, I knew nothing whatever of this place to which we were bound. That a whole squadron of Redfield's former command should have been sent to meet us did not surprise me. The troops which we had brought were to bivouac there by the sea until the goods that had been dumped there could be transported, and besides, it was but natural that the regiment should wish to honor its old chief so far as it could. But the celerity with which we started inland did cause me some little surprise.

The first boat that left the little steamer that had carried us up the coast from Manila had taken Redfield and Philly, his granddaughter, ashore. I followed shortly afterward, yet by the time my boat reached the perfumed beach, the advance-guard already had passed from sight, up a trail leading through a cleft in the hills; an ambulance, carrying Redfield and Philly, was well on its jolting way, preceded by a cavalry troop; the other men were mounted and ready, while Brinsley, the officer commanding the escort, was impatiently waiting for me to land. Behind him, an orderly held another horse, ready saddled.

"I'm awfully glad to see you, colonel. Climb on that horse, there. It's better to ride than it would be to go over this trail on wheels, even if we had any

other springed vehicle to take you—which we haven't. Be as soon as you can, will you? We want to get through these cursed hills before dark. It surely does seem mighty good to have you with us again."

This greeting, from the pessimistic Brinsley, whom I knew of old, really amounted to wild enthusiasm. Without doubt he honestly did feel pleasure in our meeting, as I did. I shook hands with him, and then hastily swung into the saddle of the led horse, and at once we started to follow the ambulance at a trot. The bulk of cavalry fell in behind us, but I noticed that there was a strong rear-guard left.

"You've got a young army here with you," I commented, when we were well started. "You surely don't expect an attack between this and the post, do you?"

"An attack! No," he answered. "I only wish they would attack. Then we could do something. But all they do is to snipe from the hills. To be sure they haven't hit any one yet; they're vile shots. But one never can tell when they may. And the worst of it is that we can't prevent 'em. I can't send flankers through that jungle—you might as well expect to have men walk through the side of a basket. And the woods are swarming with insurrectos. Clear 'em out, and they're back in an hour. They know those woods like the palm of your hand. I can't see what in blazes the general was thinking of to let Philly come to a place like this."

"Why shouldn't he have brought her?" I asked, in return. "If he hadn't, he'd have had to leave her with friends somewhere, and both he and she would have been unhappy." I spoke with some asperity, I fancy. As a matter of fact, my opinion of Philly having come to a post such as this was exactly what Brinsley's was, and so I had told Philly's grandfather plainly enough. But criticism of Redfield was a thing that I reserved strictly for my own use. "And then, perhaps Redfield knows his own affairs quite as well as either you or I," I ended crushingly.

Brinsley shrugged his shoulders.

"If he does, he takes a mighty poor way of showing it," he rejoined, entirely unimpressed. "Of course he isn't a fool; we all know that. But his taking that beautiful child to a little basin among these beastly mountains! There's a convent there, where as many of the troops as we can crowd into it are quartered. There is also a big, tumble-down building that formerly was the house of the provincial government. All the officers live there; there's plenty of room for them. There are verandas around three sides of this house. From one side there is a view of a swamp, another is all but shut in by the hills, and from the third one can look over the weeds of the plaza and see the gallows that stands on the other side, and nearly every Friday can see it in use, too. By the same token, there ought to be more Fridays in the week, if it ever is going to catch up with its contracts. There's no use in telling me that Redfield thinks that such a place is one to take Philly to. She wheedled him into taking her, probably. More likely still it's a case of 'my wife, Jane.'"

Of course I understood the allusion. Anybody in the army would. I don't remember that I ever heard what Jane's other name was, but the story is this: An order had been issued, and one of the officers who received it replied to headquarters in some such words as follow:

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your order to the effect that officers going to Blank will not be accompanied by their families. My wife, Jane, refuses to obey said order. Kindly send instructions.

Very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

JOHN SMITH,
Captain.

The tale is said to be a true one. I won't vouch for it. But be that as it may, it is certain that Jane established a precedent which has made army women rise up and call her blessed, for it further related that the order was rescinded.

What Brinsley had said was true. Philly's case was not unlike that of

Jane. She had practically "refused to obey said order," and the weakness of her grandfather in everything where she was concerned had enabled her to carry out her intention of coming with him.

"But there are other Janes at the post, aren't there?" I asked. "It looks to me very much as though one of those horses up there by the ambulance carried a riding-skirt." For we were overtaking the party that had preceded us, and now and then, when the trail was straight enough, could see the ambulance.

"Oh, there are other Janes, right enough," replied Brinsley, with a snort. "Barring the one you see up there, there are four of 'em. They average about fifty-five years and two hundred pounds apiece. You can't lose 'em. The one whose riding-skirt you saw is younger. She started that way and is becoming more so; with each year that passes. You know her, I fancy. She was old Brainard's daughter—Major Brainard, of the Sixty-sixth."

Of course I knew Fanny Brainard; had known her always. And while it is true that I always had regarded her as a specimen of the less desirable type of army girl, I could see no occasion for Brinsley's sneering tone while speaking of her.

"She can't be more than twenty-eight or thereabouts," said I, rather shortly.

"She isn't that," he answered. "She was twenty-six—three years ago, and now she's only twenty-seven."

"Didn't I hear that she had married somebody?" I asked, by way of shifting the trend of our conversation.

"Very likely. His name was Phelps—medical corps. He died, and so got out of the scrape five years back. She's after another victim, now."

There was no doing anything with Brinsley when he had a mood of this sort on him; I had found that out by experience long ago. So I gave up my attempt to switch him into a better one as a bad job. For a time we jogged along in a silence broken only by hoofbeats deadened on the soft trail and

the faint, rhythmic clatter of accouterments.

"It's young Tommy Pendale that she's after," Brinsley went on at last, more bitterly still. "He has money, in moderation, as well as nearly everything else that ought to attract a woman—a woman of a different type than hers, one would think. I take an interest in that boy. I like him. But what can one do?"

"Nothing, generally speaking," I acquiesced. "But will she land him, do you think?"

"Heaven only knows," he responded, with a sigh. "'A little widow is a dangerous thing.' Hang it all, Drake, you know how helpless four out of five real men would be in a situation such as that. What chance, then, do you suppose a boy like poor Tommy Pendale would have with a determined woman like this one? About the same that a parlor-match would in the infernal regions, if you ask me. Why on earth can't she take one of her own kind, do you suppose? What little money poor Tommy has, I fancy you'd say, and that would about hit the fact. I don't for a moment think she cares for the boy himself, and there's a man—he's riding behind her now—who's simply crazy about the woman. He'll collapse if she looks at him. And I really think she likes him the better of the two, for if ever a man and woman were designed by nature for each other, those two are Shark Flanders and——"

"Shark Flanders!" I repeated. "You don't mean to say that *he's* with you still."

"He's another sort that's hard to lose," answered Brinsley dryly. "Yes, he's still with us, and still devotes, to the neglect of his duty, most of his time to Fanny Phelps and those new Gugu friends of his."

"Oh!" said I blankly. For a moment I did not quite catch the significance of what Brinsley had told me. Then it dawned upon me. "Do you really mean that Flanders makes friends with the natives around here, or were you joking?" I asked. "It seems impossible—such conduct would appear too ex-

traordinary for an officer, even him. Why, all of them, or nearly all, are insurrectos or connected with them—at all events, enemies of the government that he serves; from all I've heard, that is."

"There isn't any question of 'nearly' about it," rejoined Brinsley very positively. "They're all enemies, all insurrectos, or thieves, which generally amounts to the same thing, or those who sympathize with and actively aid said thieves. Flanders' conduct in chumming with them is simply scandalous. If we had any colonel except Swanson, it wouldn't be tolerated for a moment. But Swanson hasn't now, and never has had, the backbone of a jelly-fish. I tell you, Drake, it was a bad day for this regiment when that old man in the ambulance was promoted."

Of course it pleased me to hear Brinsley speak in this way of his old colonel, but I had sense enough not to say so. The embarrassment of having been caught in the act of saying a kindly thing would have rendered him dumb, to all intents and purposes, for an indefinite period, and I wanted to hear more about The Shark. An intelligent interest in one's fellow men is the keynote of my philosophy.

"But why do you suppose he does chum in with the natives like that?" I asked.

Brinsley shrugged his shoulders.

"I can't even guess," said he. "It certainly does look queer, though. Of course there's nothing to base charges upon. Yet this much is true. There was a corporal in his troop. A bad lot; a blackguard, but a notorious favorite of Flanders'. This corporal—his name is Shane—was known to be on intimate terms with the natives. Could speak their beastly language, and all that. He was put in arrest, and would have been reduced. Flanders went and had a long talk with him in his quarters—I saw him there. That night Shane broke his arrest and deserted. It was just after that that the sudden intimacy between Flanders and those 'little brown brothers' of ours commenced. It looks queer, I say."

It did look queer; very queer. And though of course, as Brinsley had said, there was nothing upon which to base a formal accusation of any kind, yet the mere fact that an officer should associate, on terms of friendly equality with natives—and natives who were more or less openly disaffected toward the government which that officer served—seemed to me not only undignified to the last degree, but very bad discipline, as well. I could not help feeling that had Redfield still been at the head of his old regiment, such a thing as that could not have happened.

"I must admit this much, though," Brinsley went on, after a pause. "Flanders isn't behaving as badly in this new fad of his as he would have been doing if he had taken it up a little earlier. The natives, for the past few weeks, have been comparatively good. The sniping has stopped, and they no longer try to cut sentries into unpleasantly small pieces with their bolos. Let's jog on a bit faster. I ought to be getting to the head of the column, where I belong."

"To what do you attribute this change of heart on their part?" I asked, as we put our horses to a stiff trot.

"The secret-service reports say that they've got a row on between two rivals for the leadership of their precious gang. I think it's because they're saving up their energies to come down on us one of these days and give us the time of our lives," replied Brinsley promptly. "I haven't any information to that effect; it's only a hunch that I've got, but I wouldn't mind backing that hunch for a small amount. Have you any loose change you'd care to risk on it?"

I shook my head. At that time I was utterly unversed in the ways of the gentle Filipino, and therefore declined to speculate upon his probable conduct. We had caught up with the ambulance by this time, and were riding directly behind, waiting until the road should widen a little, so that we might get by. The vehicle itself, and those who rode beside it, took up, as it was, all the available space.

"Look!" grunted Brinsley. "Look at the three of 'em playing their little game. One against t'other; that's the way. But I doubt if things are coming quite as she'd like to have 'em. Watch."

His grunt ended in a malicious little chuckle. There was no need for him to tell me to watch; I was sufficiently interested to do that without his bidding. One of the players in the little game of which Brinsley had spoken was strange to me, and it was long since I had seen either of the other two before. Both of these had changed much, and neither of them for the better.

Fanny, even as a girl, had been built upon a generous scale; and now that scale had become amplified. Soon she would be fat. Her voice was louder than of yore, and her hair more aggressively blond. When she turned in her saddle to throw me, by way of greeting, an utterly undesired kiss, I noticed that her face had hardened and become more coarse. Flanders, too, had laid on weight. There were pouches under his eyes, and his receding chin now had become simply one of a number. Yet, in spite of all this, he still retained a measure of his unrefined sort of good looks.

All the dash, however, and all the swagger which formerly had characterized the man, now had left him. Instead there had come upon him the expression of an utter devotion, the like of which I had never seen before, except perhaps on the face of a dog. Fanny filled his whole mental horizon, and he made no attempt to conceal the fact. Even to a casual observer such as I was, the fact was as patent as though he had stood in his stirrups and shouted it. That Shark Flanders, as I had known him, could become so changed, that he could be capable of an affection such as this, which was evident in his every word and look; that the heart of this man, selfish, cold, and cunning as it had always been, could now harbor a love that seemed to make its owner oblivious of all save the object of that love, filled me with unbounded amazement.

That Brinsley was right when he said that Fanny really would have preferred Flanders, I could not bring myself to believe. When Brinsley expressed an opinion, it usually, I had found, was borne out by the facts, but this time I was sure he was mistaken. By all rules, perhaps, she should have done so. They were of the same sort, she and Flanders; they spoke the same language, as one might say, and so could understand each other. But rules, more often than not, won't apply in cases such as this, and before five minutes had passed I was as sure as I was of Flanders' devotion to her that, whether from pique or any other cause, it was young Pendale and not The Shark that she wanted.

Pendale, who until then I never had seen, rode on the side of the ambulance opposite the other two and directly in front of me. I liked the way he sat his horse; I liked his handsome, rather grave, square-chinned profile. He seemed all that Brinsley had said of him, "and then some," as an old sergeant of mine was wont to remark. I could see the profile, too, notwithstanding the fact that I was directly behind him, for his face was turned to the ambulance where Philly sat. In fact, though I am sure that he was utterly unaware of the fact, Pendale stared abominably.

Philly knew it. I could tell that by the way the blood came and went under her olive skin, though she tried to convey the impression that she was absorbed in Fanny's loud reminiscences of their childhood. These reminiscences were well worth listening to, in a way. They were cleverly told, and managed to give the notion, without violating the literal truth, that her childhood and Philly's were coexistent, though Philly had but just turned seventeen.

I doubt, though, if Philly heard much of what her companion said. Young Pendale's fixed regard embarrassed her, probably, but she was not displeased. It would be far too much to expect that a girl who had grown in a night, so to speak, from a wild, leggy imp of

a child to a most beautiful young woman, should be seriously offended because a decidedly good-looking and eligible young man is so struck by that beauty that he loses, temporarily, his head and his manners.

But though Fanny kept up her stream of reminiscence undiminished, she lost nothing of what was going on. And indeed, when I came to contrast her artificial, world-hardened face with Philly's dewy freshness, it was hard not to feel some sympathy with her. Probably she could read in Pendale's look far more than I, and though it was not in her nature to suffer deeply, perhaps, yet her suffering just then was acute, I am sure; for, in her own way, she showed it. Now and again she would throw over her shoulder to Flanders some bantering word with a sting in it, and when one of them made him wince, as always happened, it afforded her evident though temporary relief.

In fact, Fanny's conversation became difficult indeed for her to sustain. Even Redfield's manner, in spite of his invariable gentle courtesy, became abstracted, and his replies more and more vague. He peered uneasily at the winding trail and the wooded hills that shut it in. There came a short halt, and sending the ambulance on a little way, he got out, came up to us, and laid his hand on the neck of my friend's horse.

"I don't like this, Brinsley. I don't like it at all," said he, in a low tone. "Why, man, if the natives should take it into their heads to attack us what sort of defense would we be able to offer? None at all, or practically none, strung out as we necessarily are. And remember that we have women here with us—two of them."

"No *insurrectos* have been seen around here in any considerable numbers for more than a month, sir. We surely would have known if they had been near us in any force. Native scouts report that they're concentrating in Zambales, near the border," replied Brinsley, leaping from his horse. It was all he could say. That in case of an attack we were in a most unfavorable position was patent to any one.

"The scouts say! Of course they do!" Redfield spoke with far more irritability than he usually showed, and I noticed that his fist closed on the light stick that he carried, so that it snapped. "Don't you suppose I know what the scouts say?" he went on. "That's why I was sent to this place—to establish a base from which we could clear out those men who are concentrating in Zambales—or somewhere else. Those *insurrectos* aren't all idiots. Especially that man Luna of theirs. He'd know that his only play was to beat us in detail if he could, before we could get back to the post. He couldn't find a better place to do it in. Moreover, there are men in that scrub on those hills. I've been against Indians too long not to know the signs. Is the ground as bad as this all along the trail?"

"It opens out into quite a broad valley a little way beyond this, sir. Then the hills close in again, and it's worse than ever, I fear."

"Start for that valley at once, then," commanded Redfield crisply. "Have the advance-guard halt when it gets there. Go yourself to the head of the column. The enemy may think we intend to pass directly on, and so wait for us in the bad ground beyond. I'll stick to the ambulance. It won't do to frighten Mrs. Phelps and—and my granddaughter, you know. And perhaps unnecessarily. Yes, perhaps unnecessarily—who knows?"

He tried to smile as he finished, but there was a little catch in his voice as he spoke of Philly, and his face went white with the pallor that nothing but the notion of danger to her could bring. Once before, when she was a child, I had seen it. In fact, Redfield, perhaps the bravest man and the best soldier I ever knew, was frightened, and frightened badly. I knew well the wonderful keenness of his trained sight, and yet, my own sight is good and was trained, to a somewhat less degree, in the same school; but though I swept the hills with my glasses, I could see none of the signs of which he spoke. So that while in a way I shared Red-

field's uneasiness, yet I could not agree with him in his apparent certainty that an attack was intended.

The column mounted, and at the short blasts of the bugle moved forward. Joltingly the ambulance accompanied it. Brinsley, pushing by, started for his post, and I went with him. Never had I cherished any great affection for Fanny Brainard—or Phelps, rather—and now, with this new element of danger that had come up, I felt that her chatter would be unendurable. Redfield might stand it if he wished to. As a matter of fact, it was impossible, practically, for him to avoid it. But I felt no such obligation on my part. As I passed by Flanders he spoke, and for the first time that day in my hearing.

"There's smoke over there on that hill," said he. "And there's no one living there, I know."

"And what if there is smoke there?" instantly demanded Redfield. "It means, presumably, that some one, cutting timber or hunting in those hills, has lighted a fire and is cooking his dinner. The matter does not seem to me an important one."

I fear that Redfield never would have shone in the rôles of either a diplomat or an actor. His irritability over what ordinarily would have been a perfectly harmless remark naturally surprised all who were unaware of its cause. I saw Philly look up with a curious light in her big, dark eyes; and even Fanny stopped her talk for the moment. Formerly Flanders had been mortally afraid of his old colonel, and with reason; now, to my surprise, he permitted himself a differing opinion.

"No one cuts timber up there, sir; they couldn't get it out," he remarked. "I don't think it's hunters, either. The smoke is from too big a fire, and—look! There's another one. Seems more to me like parties of insurrectos signaling."

I looked where he pointed, and saw two thin columns of smoke rising from the hills. They had not been there a moment before. Though at that time I did not know that the Filipinos employed this method of communication,

I was familiar with it as used by our North American Indians, and so recognized at once the probable truth of what Flanders said. So did Redfield, probably. His gray mustache fairly bristled with rage.

"Am I to infer, sir, that it is your deliberate wish to frighten these ladies with such absurd theories?" he rasped out. "And what, may I ask, do you think that small parties of the enemy would be doing so close to us, with not only this strong column here, but a stronger force on each side of them—one at the post and another at the port which we just have left? If you cannot find any more profitable and pleasant subject for discussion, sir, I must ask you to hold your tongue."

Then my old friend subsided again into the seat from which he had half risen and tried, with very indifferent success, to look cool and contemptuous. But the mischief he dreaded was done, and his own vehemence had contributed more than any other cause to this end.

With the exception of two red spots on her cheeks, which seemed indelible, Fanny turned pale. With a little gasp of fear and dismay, she appeared somehow to sink down in her saddle; her figure lost its shape, and she appeared like an old woman—old and worn. Upon Philly the effect was exactly opposite. She bounced up and down on the cushions and clapped her hands, as from a child she had always done when more than usually pleased with anything, and her eyes grew brighter than ever.

"Oh, *do* you think they'll really attack us, Mr. Flanders?" she cried. "How *lovely*! When do you think—"

"Philly, be quiet!" commanded her grandfather. "Of course no one will attack. Didn't you hear what I said?"

Philly looked at him for a second or two that seemed much longer. "Yes, I heard you, Dad's Dad," said she, "but I don't believe you, dear. You said what you did because you want to keep it from us, for fear we'd be frightened. Because otherwise it would have been too mean for words not to let me know

that a thing of that sort was to happen. You know as well as any one how I've always wanted to see something of the sort."

With a sigh of despair, Redfield, for at least the thousandth time to my knowledge, gave up, as a puzzle that was utterly beyond him, trying to guess what his granddaughter was likely to say or do, and why. He settled back on his seat.

"Oh, Philly! How *can* you?" wailed Fanny. She tried to go on, but could not. By this time she had melted into a sort of wilted mass, that wobbled in her saddle with each movement of her horse. Her appearance was not attractive, yet I looked upon her then with something less than my usual passive dislike. For she had begun to cry, naturally and unaffectedly, with no thought for her appearance. It was the first time I ever had known her to do anything unaffectedly.

Then it was that Flanders rode forward, and in sight of all who cared to look, laid his hand on her shoulder. "Don't mind," said he, almost gaily. "It won't be much of an attack, very likely, when it does come. But if it should be I'd gladly give my life to keep your little finger from being hurt. I think you know that, don't you? Any one would, I think."

He spoke in a low tone, it is true, but not so low that I did not hear him. The only effect upon Fanny was to make her cry rather harder than before. Philly gazed at them both with wide eyes that were full of sympathy. The speech and action evidently appealed to her, as they would to nearly any young girl of her romance-loving age. But Redfield snorted.

"Major Brinsley, I was under the impression that I had directed you to proceed to your proper post," he snapped.

Since Flanders had begun to speak, it is true that Brinsley had sat on his horse, staring with a look of surprise on his face such I rarely had seen there. But before that he had paused only to despatch orderlies to close up the column and pull in the advance and

rear-guard, so the reproach was not in reality undeserved. Still, without reply, he saluted and rode on. In a few steps I had caught up with him, and was riding by his side toward the head of the column.

"I never had to swallow a snake like that from old Redfield before," said Brinsley, after a little. "I suppose, though, I really deserved it in a way. I was clean astonished out of my senses for the moment, and that's a fact. I don't think it ever happened before."

"Astonished! By what? Philly?" I asked.

"Philly—no!" he replied. "You mean her wanting to see a fight if we should have one? Why, that's been a pet desire of hers any time these seven or eight years. She's told me about that, as I dare say she has you and every one else she ever talked with. It was Shark Flanders who got me at a standstill. Didn't you notice him?"

"I heard what he said to Fanny, if that's what you mean."

"No. Not exactly. He'd be apt enough to say a melodramatic thing like that to any woman that he wanted to impress. He always was full of that sort of swagger. The thing that astonished me was that this time he meant what he said, so far as I can tell. When he told her that the smoke was *insurrecto* signaling—which it was—and allowed it to be inferred that there would likely be an attack, he actually was pleased. It wasn't put on. He couldn't put it on. Of course he mightn't have really believed what he said, but I think he did. I'm sure he did."

"Well, and what then?" I asked. "I don't see anything astonishing in that."

"Don't you know?" replied Brinsley. "But there, I see you don't. The fact is this: the man's a coward. A constitutional coward—one such as you wouldn't meet once in a blue moon. He can't control it, apparently. I suspected it for a long time, and then, once when there was a little sniping from the hills, here—nothing to amount to anything—I saw it proved. He screamed like a woman; he unbuckled his belt and, dropping it and his sword because they

were in the way, he turned and bolted. It was all over in a few seconds; there had been only one little burst of four or five shots where he was. It so happened that no one except myself had seen him, and I—well, I kept still about it until now. My word alone wouldn't convict, and it's such a terrible thing to say about any man."

It was a terrible thing indeed to have to say about any man, and infinitely worse, of course, when that man happens to be also an officer in the army. I had read of cowards such as this before; most of us have, I suppose. But I never had known one until then. Still, I thought that the kind heart which, so I was well aware, beat under Brinsley's caustic tongue, had carried its owner too far this time. It was not right that consideration for any individual should condone what sooner or later must amount to a serious disgrace of the service. Yet, a change, from what Brinsley said, seemed to have taken place. I wondered if it really might be possible that the force of a great love could so change the nature of a man. I broached this idea to Brinsley.

"Hanged if it doesn't seem so," said he. "Still, I can't believe it. It doesn't seem possible. From what I know of the man—and that's a good deal—I'd think it more like him if he was brave because, when he spoke, he had an armored turret concealed somewhere that he could crawl into. Still, one never can tell. They say that cowards of this sort aren't responsible, any more than a man with any other disease. He may have it only part of the time—who knows? Anyhow, thank Heaven, here we are at the place where Redfield told us to stop. Just look at those signal-smokes now. We're due to catch something pretty soon, right enough; you see if we don't."

From many places in the hills now thin streams of signal-smoke mounted into the hot, dry air. As Brinsley spoke, we had reached a place where the road led through the little valley of which he had told Redfield. It was nearly flat, not more than a quarter-mile in diameter, and surrounded by

hills as it was, it was far from an ideal place to stand off an attack, though infinitely better than the road by which we had reached it.

"Here's where we'll get what's coming to us, all right," said Brinsley, with a laugh. It always took some danger, like the one that confronted us then, to make Brinsley laugh. It seemed to affect him as wine would affect another. "Watch now, when the column swings in. Column left oblique! Trot—march!"

Hardly had the horses changed their directions when Brinsley's prediction began to fulfil itself. The enemy realized then that we were not about to pass on into the bad stretch beyond the valley, and from all sides but one came the spiteful, irregular crack of rifles, which was taken up by the echoes and tossed from one steep hillside to another until the sound was like that of cackling, mocking laughter. Once the boom of an antiquated field-piece added a deeper note, and the drone of its crude projectile flying over us sounded, in contrast to the shrill whine of the rifle-balls, like a bumblebee among mosquitoes.

With a clatter of canteens and accouterments the cavalry swung into the little plain, there to be dismounted; and leaving its horses, the men were sent by scrambling up a hill—one of those bordering the road by which we had come—supposed, as no firing came from that direction, not yet to be occupied by the enemy. First the advance-guard, which had come galloping back to meet us, vanished into the thick scrub; as fast as it came, the leading section of the main column was sent after it. Soon the face of the hill was fairly alive with khaki-clad figures crashing over or through the gnarled undergrowth, using it as a ladder to climb in desperate haste the nearly perpendicular slope.

"Unsaddle there, you men! Quick!" barked Brinsley. "Pile saddles and packs and everything you can get hold of here—four saddles deep, and as high as they'll reach. In a circle. We must have some sort of a shelter for the two women," he added, in a lower tone, to

me. "It won't be a good one, but it's all we have time to make now. They'll be here in a minute—yes, here they come. And hang it, Drake, look at that child Philly!"

I was looking at the ambulance as he spoke in half-angry admiration. It galloped and bounced up to us. On one of the seats, beside Philly, sat Fanny, whom they had taken from her horse. Her face was paler than before, even, and the painted spots on her cheeks correspondingly more distinct. Her eyes, with their blackened lids, stared straight ahead of her, evidently seeing little or nothing. She would have fallen, for she was paralyzed with fright, had it not been for the strong arm of the younger girl which was passed around her waist and upheld her.

But Philly's attention was anywhere else than with poor Fanny. The light of a long line of fighting ancestors was shining in her eyes, her cheeks were a little flushed, her lips slightly parted. Never had her lovely face appeared more lovely. I am sure Pendale thought so, as he still rode close by her side. I am doubtful if the thought occurred to her grandfather. His face was ashen-gray, and lolling seemingly at ease, in reality he was trying to make his gaunt body fill up as much space as possible, that it should intervene between his only living relative and any bullet that might have reached her.

Flanders was nowhere to be seen, and in view of what Brinsley had said, it did not astonish me. Still, I wondered where he was.

A Spanish bugle, so different from our trumpets in its shrill, clear tone, blew sweetly somewhere in the hills. Other bugles answered it in the complicated calls dear to the Filipino heart, until the sounds died away in the distance. With a few straggling shots, the firing ceased, and one could faintly hear the cheers of the first of our men, who, without opposition from the enemy, had reached the top of the hill up which they had been sent.

"Thank God!" cried Redfield fervently, as the lull came and he saw the ring of saddles. "Brinsley, if I get out of

this, you'll have special mention for having made that thing."

Taking Philly in his arms, he ran as lightly as a boy could have done to the frail shelter, and laid her down inside. I followed with Fanny. Not carrying her; she was too much of an armful for a man of my physique, but supporting her as best I could. We hardly had started when Flanders came galloping up from somewhere, and jumping from his horse, came forward to assist me.

"I've been scouting 'round a bit," he announced, in that loud voice of his. "Those fellows have enough of it, all right. There's no cause to be frightened, Mrs. Phelps—my word on it. Not even if there should come some more of their popping—which there won't. You see they've quite stopped now."

What he said reassured her. She was of the kind that recovers quickly. It was plain, too, that he had found favor in her sight, at which I rejoiced, for she showed it by transferring her very considerable weight from my shoulders to his, and at the same time casting at him a glance which made him color with pleasure. I did not in the least agree with him, however, that the enemy had had enough. To me it looked far more like the lull before the storm.

"What do you think of it, Brinsley?" I asked, as that officer came walking by. He had finished placing his remaining men. They were lying down, facing the hills were the enemy was. He waved toward them the handkerchief with which he had been mopping his face.

"Wait for about three minutes, and you'll see," he replied. "Those Gugs know, of course, that the firing must have been heard at the post; that a lot of our men from there will be due in a little while to come bouncing down on 'em. So their game will be to creep up closer, sheltered by that scrub, where they can't miss, and settle the matter, if possible, before reinforcements can reach us. Then there's only one thing to do. I'm going to send the men up there after 'em. Though they won't usually stand a charge, still,

their numbers—and their position—Well, anyhow, Redfield agrees with me that it's the only thing to do."

"Something like a forlorn hope?" I inquired.

He nodded without speaking, and as he did so a thought occurred to me. Even if you don't like a man, he ought not to be condemned unheard and unproved. So, though I was rather timid about broaching that idea of mine, I took my courage in both hands.

"You must have been noting how Flanders has behaved to-day, Brinsley. His troop isn't here, it's true, but the woman he cares for is. Give him a chance. Let her hear you give him his orders. That will keep him to the work if anything will," I pleaded.

"I know; I've noticed, and I can't fathom it at all," said Brinsley, thoughtfully scratching his head. "You'd understand, Drake, if you'd seen him that other time I spoke of. We can't afford to take any chances at a time like this. Yet, we're short of officers. And I can put him between young Pendale and—I'll risk it!"

With Brinsley thought and action followed close. I watched him as he strode over to the ring of saddles, upon which Flanders sat, talking unconcernedly with Fanny, who was lying down within. When Brinsley spoke, he simply saluted, lifted his hat to her, and took the post indicated, lying down behind his men. For the first time in our acquaintance I respected him, then. Doubtful somewhat, it is true, but gave him the benefit of that doubt, and allowed him the respect that is the due of any officer who does his duty.

Hardly had he taken his place when again there came the sound of the Filipino bugles. There must have been a good officer in command of those brown savages. Their rifles seemed all to speak at once, with a rattling crash, and then kept it up, more slowly, it is true, but still with a frightful rapidity. They were half the distance they had been before, and but for the fact that they could not shoot, we never could have stood before it. As it was, we suffered. A man or two on the ground

were hit; one of the horses screamed in the terrible way that a wounded horse will, and one of the ambulance mules dropped and lay kicking. I don't think Flanders saw any of this. His face was set toward the hills.

Then came the commands, echoed by our own trumpets. The men poured in a volley, another and a third, though they could see no living foe. The bugles sang "Forward!" "Double Time!" and finally "Charge!"

Our men raised the yell and went. Though short of breath and far too fat, I followed them, unlimbering my pistol as I went. There is something very compelling about a charge. And besides, I wanted to observe Flanders.

Leading his men, he reached the lower edge of the scrub, and there he stumbled and fell. It was a genuine accident enough; I am sure of that. He was on his feet again in a second, but in that second things happened. Bullets, thicker than ever, came ripping through the leaves at close range. A man in front of Flanders threw his rifle into the air as he fell, and turning at the same time, showed his face, ghastly and drawn. Another shrieked as he went down, and the young lieutenant on our right crumpled up without a sound, and his body came rolling down the hill which already he had begun to mount.

Then it was that Flanders paused. He hesitated, and with a face far more ghastly than that of the man who had fallen, he turned as though to go back. But still he hesitated. Ordinarily Flanders' face, through long courses of poker-playing, was a model of expressionlessness, but not so now. Every thrill of abject fear that beset the man's soul was painted on his face. If ever a human being struggled with himself for his birthright of manhood, Flanders did in those fleeting moments, and as I watched the struggle it replaced in my interest the battle that raged around us.

I could have shouted with joy, and dare say I did, when at length he turned deliberately and forced his trembling legs to carry him after his men, now

far up the hill. I was close behind him, my breath becoming more and more scanty, when a bullet struck him fairly in the chest, and he fell back in my arms. I eased him to the ground, and when he reached it he beckoned to me, and when I lowered my head he spoke, so that I could barely hear.

"There's no use bluffing now," he whispered. "My hand's called. I'm out. I thought it was a fake row at first. Shane was in with the natives, and he was to arrange it. I paid him, and helped him desert so that he could arrange it. I wanted to do the hero act where *she* could see me do it. But when I found we were fighting actually I tried to make good. I really did. I know you saw me turn, but I turned back again. And it's all over now. So don't—don't tell her. Promise you—you won't. For the sake of God, that I have to face!"

I did promise, and he fell back unconscious. How I dragged him out I never shall remember. I do know that while I was struggling through that scrub there came dismayed yells from

the natives, and the coughing rattle of a machine gun, telling us that the men from the post had come to our aid and had taken them in the rear. I know, too, that when I had nearly reached the bottom Brinsley and Pendale saw me and helped me carry Flanders to the flat.

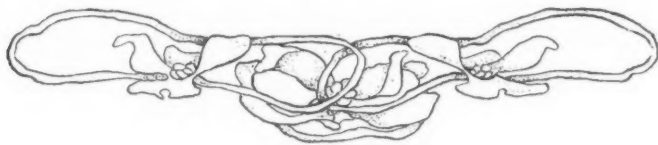
He still was breathing when we laid him there, but as Brinsley bent over him he struggled to lift his head, and then it fell back and all was over. Brinsley rose, with bared head, and for a moment stood looking down at what, a moment before, had been a brother officer.

"He did it. He made good," said he, thinking aloud. "But for her! I wonder why."

Pendale, whom we had both forgotten, flushed angrily. To him, ignorant of the train of thought that prompted the words, they must have seemed almost like a sacrilege.

"He was a brave man, sir," said he. Brinsley smiled, and laid his hand on the lad's shoulder.

"Because he loved much," he added.



TO MY CHILD

ONE thought I have to solace me for death.
 Not cringing hope of immortality;
 Nor craven faith that recompense must be
 For wrongs my heart, earth-born, here suffereth.
 Nay! When oblivion encompasseth
 This soul and substance now the life of me
 A thought beyond that self-abandoned plea
 Wilt ease the passing of my mortal breath.
 Rejoicing I shall go. I to whom power,
 Splendor of effort, beauty and desire
 Made glorious this world to its least flower;
 Rejoicing that, though I, myself, expire
 Earth's wonders, which illumined my brief hour,
 Remain for thee an inextinguished fire.

RHODA HERO DUNN.

THE LITTLE CHAP



THE man was tired. He was tired, he told himself, of the whole infernal show. For long enough, and too long now, the wings of life had dragged broken, shedding gleaming feathers along the dusty highroad where, for others, flowers grew. For others the road led to the City of Dreams; to his feet, leaden, as in nightmares one's feet are, the road was only the dust wherein he strove to advance to something, he knew not what, and, striving, failed always.

He was not ill—the body did its work well enough. He never knew fatigue. Only despair he knew. She twisted her claws in among the roots of his heart, and pulled and pulled—till he longed for the roots of life to sunder suddenly, and the whole sorry business be done with.

His rooms were haunted, not by strange ghosts with frank grievances of their own—he could have welcomed them—but by his own dead hopes and dreams. Life was a chain of cruel jests, and the merriest of them was the knowledge that once he, too, had been merry. The books that lined his walls looked somber and forbidding to eyes that no longer loved them.

In the gardens of Gray's Inn the rooks cawed to branches now wholly bare. For it was winter, and if there had ever been summer the man had forgotten it. The dark-painted doors,

two of them, shut from him the dark staircase. In his low-ceiled rooms twilight hung veils like cobwebs. And it seemed to him that in all the world there was nothing that made the world worth while.

If he had had friends he had tired out their friendship. If he had had a love her love had wearied of his ingratitude and exactions. If, with the waning of the winter daylight, his life-lamp should also go out none would be the loser, he least of all. Only his laundress coming at her own time and season would be a little surprised, a little shocked perhaps even, to find it where she thought to find him. But she would console herself with an orgy of sudden easy pilfering before she went away to tell the men in blue that another man had grown tired of the game and gone out.

Yet, "It looks a pleasant world enough," the man said. The fire glowed deeply; a flicker of flame now and again lit up the glasses of his pictures and mirrored itself in the polish of his old mahogany, struck a warm note from the folds of his curtains and the backs of his books. "A pleasant world—and I hate it!"

He had no need to work for money, and he had no heart to work for love. So he sat in the warm dusk and hated everything.

And the dusk deepened to a darkness that was like black velvet in the shadows of the room, and like gray velvet shot with gold in the oblong of the tall

windows, because they looked out over the Inn Gardens and were filled with the sky that is over London.

When it was quite dark he sat for a very long time very quiet in his chair and remembered the color of the fields that he had played in when he was a child, and the color of the sky that had been over him, and the color of the sun that he had seen rise over the orchard slopes at home, and how then he had not thought that life would be like this.

The fire fell together with a crash, and he stretched his arms and sighed and got up out of his chair. And it was then that he heard the child crying. It was crying softly with subdued snufflings and gurglings, and the sound came from beyond his door. On the oak stairs he found the child sitting. Its head in the pitiable cap—a man's cap with a peak—leaned against the carved banisters. Its hands, black and red, were screwed up against its eyes. Its clothes were horrible. One garment, outlined with mangy fur, wet and slimy.

"Hullo, I say!" said the man. "Don't cry. What's the matter?"

"I'm lost," said the child.

"But how did you get in here?"

"It's raining outside," said the child, sniffed, rubbed its fists once more in its eyes, and stopped crying.

"You've got a fire," it said, turning bright eyes to the open door.

"Where's your mother?" he asked.

"She's lost me," said the child. "She said to stay there and she'd come back. And she didn't come back."

"Stay *where*?" he asked.

"There," said the child. "I say, you do burn lots of coal."

He could not resist this second appeal.

"Come in," he said, and the child scrambled to its feet, little feet in unspeakable boots.

"I like you," it said. "You talk like my daddy used to."

The child squatted on the hearth-rug, and with perfect self-possession took off the dreadful cap and laid it on the fender to dry.

"It's my best," it explained.

The man and the child looked at each other. In the child's eyes a merry confidence dawned slowly, like sunshine, and two smiles met.

"Do you ever," the man asked doubtfully, "have a bath?"

"Saturdays," the child answered promptly.

"Could you—if I turned on the water for you—could you give yourself a bath?"

"Course I could," it said, "if you was to soap my back."

He turned on the water for it, and he did soap its back.

He liked the child from the moment he saw its smile, but he did not love it until he had held its body in his arms.

He has never been able to remember whether it had dark hair or light hair—he does not know the color of its eyes. But he knows that the eyes were bright and gay, that the wet hair curled in little rings as it dried by the fire, and that the little body, thin and fine as an ivory carving, was yet straight and beautiful. The jacket of his pajamas made, with the sleeves rolled up, a garment warm and adequate.

He brought the child out of the bathroom and set it on the Persian rug, where it crouched with the grace and self-possession of a cat that had always lived there.

"Comfy now?" he said, and remembered how they had asked him that, after the bath, when he was little in the wooden house among the cherry orchards.

"Fine," said the child. "This coat's as soft as soft. I wish mother was here. She'd wash out my clothes. I suppose *you* couldn't."

The man actually hesitated a moment before saying: "No—I don't think I could."

"Well, never mind," it said cheerily.

"I'll buy you some new clothes," he said.

"I say!"

Pause.

Then: "I ain't 'ad me tea," the child told the fire.

After that came cake and milk and

bread and marmalade, crumbs on the Persian rug and sticky fingers on the bright brass fender-rail.

"Mother was buying things for Christmas," said the child. "Nice things to eat, and candles, too."

"I suppose," he said idly, "you don't know what Christmas means?"

"Oh, don't I!" said the child. "Shall I tell you my piece about it, what my daddy taught me."

The child instantly and surprisingly scrambled onto the man's knees, folded its hands like the little images of the praying Samuel, and said in a pretty hushed voice and an accent that was not its own:

"Upon the Christmas morn
The King of Heaven was born:
He came on earth to be
A little child like me.

The King of Heaven lay
Upon a bed of hay.
The wise men came to see
A little child like me.

Jesus, give peace and joy
To me, your little boy;
And let me learn to be
A little child like Thee!"

"Thank you, dear," said the man, and added lamely: "Very nice indeed."

"My daddy made it up his own self, purpose for me," said the child, and threw his arms round the man's neck. "D'you know my daddy?" it asked. "He's been gone away a long time now."

The man would not look at the little corner of the blotted scroll of life that seemed to uncurl at the words. He would not question, would not speculate. Through and through him, back and forth like water lapping from rock to rock in a narrow channel, ran the warm wave of longing, of desire.

"If he were only mine! If the little chap were my own!"

And the thin arms hung round his neck like a necklace of price.

When the necklace loosened at the touch of sleep the man gathered the child in his arms very closely, and sat quiet, a long time, looking into the fire. And at last he laid the child in

his own bed, and went out, to buy things for it.

He bought clothes and toys and pleasant sweet foods, and his fancy busied itself with a life that should be quite different from any that he had known or dreamed of. For hours had gone by now since he had found the child in the cold shadows of the staircase, and the hope he had not dared to look at had grown to a strong certainty that bade him look in its face, unafraid, with glad eyes.

The mother had meant to lose the child. She would not come back. Certainly she would not come back. The child was his own. And what would he not make of his own?

They had closed the gates of the Inn before he went out, and they opened to him as he returned. His arms were full of lumpy parcels, and the stairs seemed longer than usual, but here, at last, was the black door with his name whitely painted on it. He had to set down all the parcels on the stairs while he found his key.

He threw all the parcels on the sofa and turned up a light. The fire had burned clear again. What a pleasant room it was for a child to wake up in! He would set out the food and the toys and the clothes, and then bring the child in and hold it in his arms till it woke to all the little intimate joys and surprises he had prepared for it. Moving very softly so that the wakening should not come too soon he unpacked toys and sweets and warm pretty garments, and laid out everything on table and chairs.

Then he turned up all the electric lights and laid a match-flame to all the candles that never were lighted. The old furniture gave back the light as a mirror gives it. The things he had bought to please the child made spots of crude incongruous color on the background of the dark room, set in the low key of a life from which youth had long gone away.

The room being thus transfigured to the lit shrine of youth and love and the heart of the child, he went to bring back in his arms the child itself.

And the child was not there. His bed lay smooth and neat—on its pillow, neatly folded, the garment that he had seen the child wear as, after the bath, it sat before his fire. The child was gone, its clothes were gone; there were no crumbs, he noticed now, on the Persian hearth-rug. All was as though no child had ever been at all in those dark rooms.

Then the heart of the man was wild with anger and fierce resentment, as is the heart of a man robbed of his most precious treasure.

He searched wildly, displacing the ordered furniture, disarranging the folds of curtains and hangings and, this being, fruitlessly, done, went out to search the stairs in their dark corners, and, later, the quiet squares of the Inn.

But he did not find the child.

Then, the sense of loss deepening and intensifying within him he found himself at the police-station, asking somewhat wildly for a child that was lost—a little child—no, he did not know its name, nor the colors of its eyes and hair; he had found it and meant to keep it for his own; and now it was gone. He did not know its name, but it had bright eyes and curly hair and a very merry smile. It had worn an old cloth cap and a rag of a coat with mangy fur.

The policemen looked at him and at each other, and smiled furtively.

"Yes, sir. Certainly, sir," one answered, to whom a silvery voice had spoken. "We'll keep a lookout, and let you know if we come across the little chap."

And when the man was gone back to that room where the toys and sweets and clothes had emptied themselves of meaning and value, the men in blue smiled more broadly still.

"We're so likely to come across the little chap, ain't we," one said to the other, "seeing there's thousands and thousands of little chaps exactly like him? Bright eyes and curly hair and a merry smile, and dressed in rags and no father! Well, well!"

Perhaps it is because there are so many thousands that the man has never found the little chap again.

But he has found some of the others; and he knows more about buying clothes and sweets than he did on that first night. Only no other child could ever be the same as that one. No other child comes to such a desert, with such a rose. And sometimes he wonders whether, after all— But he will never know. Or perhaps some day it may be that he will know. He thinks of that, very often he thinks of it, and hopes.



SONG

WHAT of snow and sleet and rain,
Poverty and wretchedness;
What of hunger, cold and pain—
All life's phantoms of distress—
If, though heart-torn, one may kneel
Just thy hand-touch, Love, to feel!

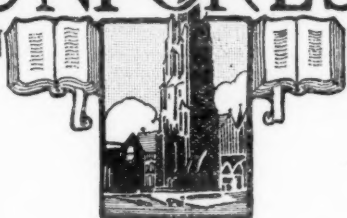
What of evil's kith and kin,
Treachery, deceit and sin—
All earth's fairest hopes in flight;
Blindness; death's fear-shrouded night;
If at last, O Love, to be
Thine, thine for eternity!

WILLIAM STRUTHERS.

THE UNFORESEEN

BY MABEL NELSON

THURSTON



LARRABEE, pushing aside his plate after a few hasty mouthfuls, looked across at Joyce. His keen dark face was drawn with weariness and the eyes sunken and dull.

"It's all up," he said. "I've failed again."

"Isn't that what you're in the fight for?" Joyce asked.

"Oh, quit it!" Larrabee answered irritably. "I beg your pardon, Tom—I'm a beast. I reckon I've got about to the end of my tether this time. Doctor Denison overhauled me to-day, ordered six months in Patagonia or the Azores or some other backwater—the usual prescription. What I want is a dose of success. I don't ask a big one. I'd go back into the muck again in three days and fight to the end of my life. I bought the *Citizen* seven years ago. I've worked over it like a dog, day and night, through those seven years, trying to drive into the great American mind the faintest idea of civic honor and duty. Well, you know the results—there are none absolutely, not the faintest glimmer of one. Somehow I had been sure that we should win out in the C. P. & A. grab—I don't know why, but I was sure of it. It was such a colossal swindle that a baby might have seen through it; yet the great American public calmly sits back and shrugs its shoulders. In two days it goes through. It has gone through now, practically. Joe McNulty is laughing in his sleeve,

and he has the best of reasons for doing it."

"What puzzles me is how you ever could have hoped to down McNulty. There aren't above three men in the country that could do it, and they're all safely muzzled long ago. It's all right for you to go tilting at all the dragons if you're made that way, but in this age we know that the dragon is sure to win."

"Why is McNulty sure to win? Who made McNulty? The American people—that's who. We—as a nation—are the most sentimental people on the face of the earth. Show us a sick woman or a crippled child and we'll turn our pockets inside out for them, but we won't lift a finger to break the power of a boss whose grab will affect thousands upon thousands of women and children. Do you know McNulty's strongest card? His mother—plain old countrywoman living in a little village down on the Mohawk. McNulty goes down to see her every week. Once he had her up in Albany, showing her the sights; they were snapped about seventeen thousand times, she in her old-fashioned bonnet and shawl; McNulty—well, you know McNulty. Do you think he doesn't know the political value of that old bonnet and those weekly visits? America adores the picture. It will let him hold up the bonnet with one hand and pick its pocket with the other. By George, it would make a cartoon! But it would kill the *Citizen* quicker than arsenic. Every paper in the country would jump on us, and the

only result would be an aureole for the bonnet and a funeral—without mourners—for the *Citizen*."

Joyce watched for a moment his friend's long nervous fingers tapping restlessly, then he leaned forward, putting an affectionate hand upon his old chum's arm.

"Give it up, old man. Take Denison's advice and run down to Patagonia or wherever it was he wanted to pack you. I dare say my constitution could stand a bit of holiday, and I'll go with you. Martyrdom isn't as fashionable as it once was; it doesn't pay in this age."

Larrabee started as if an electric shock had struck him.

"By the bones of Gutenberg *I won't!*" he exclaimed so sharply that half a dozen people at neighboring tables turned curiously. "I'll die if I have to, but I'll die in the saddle."

The other man smiled. "I know you will, Jack," he said quietly.

Father Timothy O'Bourke was trudging down street on his way to see pretty wayward little Rosie Flanigan whose mother had sent for him to come and "say the word to Rosie, the crither." Father O'Bourke's progress resembled nothing so much as the triumphant advance of a snowball when the snow is of exactly the right consistency. He started from Henry Street. At the corner of Hamilton he was detected by a couple of shouting youngsters who immediately attached themselves, limpetlike, to his person. Half a square farther down the escort had increased to ten; by the time he reached Catherine Street and Maggie Flanigan's, the father was all but invisible in the midst of a noisy and joyous mob. He shook himself free of them, however, when he reached Maggie's, with an ease born of long practise.

"Be off, ye young rascals! Is it yer-selves that's thinkin' I'm walkin' abroad to fill up me time? The foine throuble ye're thryin' to git me into for tollin' ye away from yer own firesides! Scat-

ter now—back home wid ye, ivery wan!"

The children yelled, cheered, made a final dash at him, and then scuttled down the street. Father O'Bourke stood watchful for a moment, shaking his head at them if they looked back, and then turned into the tenement.

He was a little rotund shabby man, with a round face full of smiling creases, and small, twinkling, kind blue eyes. Plainly a person concerned with small affairs, as provincial at heart, though he had lived thirty years in New York, as if he had but the week before landed from County Cork.

As a matter of fact, Father O'Bourke rarely read a newspaper—chiefly because he never had time to find out what the news was about. Spending all his days and a good part of his nights comforting the sorrows, fighting the temptations, wrestling with the endless problems of his unruly parish, he was himself known as a problem to various up-to-date organizations for dealing with the conditions of the poor, because of his reprehensible and incurable habit of putting his hand into his own pocket at every cry of need. Even his church apparently accepted him at his own humble valuation, a dozen priests having advanced over his head to positions of greater influence or more substantial reward, while he, growing yearly rounder and shabbier, trotted endlessly up and down tenement stairs, and knew by name—Heaven knows how—every baby on the streets.

Not that he was always smiling—or, no! There were big hulking fellows who had stood twisting their hats like embarrassed schoolboys under the father's sharp rebukes; there were men that had steered by the saloons for months at a time—men with whom he had gone to the police-court sternly ordering their confession of offense, and then visited week by week over on the Island. There were days, and more often nights, that the father's old, shabby, disorderly study could have told of— Yet somehow at the end he was always smiling at somebody.

"Sure it must be the children," he

defended himself to a lean and ill-favored brother. "'Tis they pull the smiles out of ye in the blackest day and—man alive—there's such a raft o' children!"

Up at Maggie Flanigan's that afternoon it was pretty bad. Pretty little Rosie was sullen and obstinate, and foolish, tearful Maggie was perpetually saying the wrong things. Father O'Bourke looked grave when he left, but Biddy McCartney calling to him as he passed to tell of a lady on the top floor who hadn't "had a bite savin' a cup o' tay for a day an' a night," he put aside Rosie's problem for the moment, and hurried round to Daly's for some bread and potatoes.

Daly, being as usual out of wrapping-paper, apologized profusely to his reverence, and wrapped the bread in a piece of newspaper. Father O'Bourke, looking down at it absently as he picked up his bundle, was held by a couple of head-lines.

"Dollars or Lives? The Tenement-Reform Bill Hanging in the Balance."

Father O'Bourke had not known that there was any tenement-reform bill—which shows his lack of civic spirit—but he knew, no one better, that tenements needed reforming. Standing at Daly's counter he read the article eagerly. The bill covered the destruction of thirteen blocks of tenements in which the mortality was 27.2 per thousand, the blocks to be rebuilt at once upon the best models obtainable by the Tenement Reform Commission, and one square to be reserved for a park. And this bill would be tabled unless within three days public sentiment was aroused to prevent it.

Father O'Bourke read to the end and looked up. "Where's the rest of the paper this came from?" he asked.

"'Tis yesterday's *Citizen*," Daly replied, apologetically pushing it across the counter. "It's a crank paper it is—'tis a shame fer me to have imposed it upon yer riverence. Sure some wake-minded gossoon lift it behind him, an' well he might. But 'tis a blow to me store to be seen wid it. Let me wrap the loaf ag'in, yer honor."

Father O'Bourke barely heard him. Yesterday's *Citizen*—that left two days. He accepted the loaf, reclothed in proper political dress in the shape of the *Sun*, and went down the street in a brown study.

The old tenements—the black enemy which had ruined so many of his people, against which they were constantly fighting their tragic losing battle—to be destroyed, God's sunlight to come in, a portion of their heritage of freedom and joy to be restored to the children, a bit of green for weary old eyes to look upon, a place free and open and undefiled for Rosie and Jim and hundreds like them to do their courting in—all this a possibility and all this lost because—nobody cared!

Father O'Bourke was so absorbed that when young Patrick Flanigan darted out from a cellarway and clung like a burr to the skirt of his coat, he strode along unconscious of the impediment, which so amazed young Patrick that he dropped off and stood gaping open-mouthed after his vanishing friend.

"'Tis the evil eye has bewitched him sure," he muttered uncomfortably, making a hasty sign to avert the omen.

The little priest climbed hurriedly to the tenement of the "lady on the top flure," and then making his way as quickly as possible through knots of detaining friends, he hurried home to think the matter out.

Father O'Bourke's study was like Father O'Bourke himself, small and shabby and worn by crowding, tragic, toiling human lives. The little priest rooted around in the closet until he found a pair of old slippers, and having gotten into them, dropped wearily into a big disreputable chair before the tiny grate. It was a raw day, and his housekeeper, who adored him, had, as usual upon cold days, disobeyed his orders and kindled a fire. He stretched his tired feet toward it unconsciously. *Sunlight—freedom for the children, safety for his young people, rest for the old.* The bright picture shone for a moment in the flames—then vanished.

"'Tis the sin of me fer neglectin'

the poor rich," he sighed whimsically, but with his round face unwontedly grave. Suddenly he sat up with a jerk. Joe McNulty!

It had been months since he had even thought of Joe, five years since he had seen him—the five years in which he had become a great man—ragged, sun-burned, freckled little Joe McNulty whom, back in a little country village, he had caught robbing his apple-trees one night, and had made come in while he filled cap and pockets for him. His eyes twinkled over the memory of it—the boy's fright, incredulity, and finally the indifferent air with which he accepted the unexpected turn of fortune, and the swaggering equality of his "Good-by, father." But the next morning the boy was at his door with half a dozen mountain-trout which he pulled limp and wet from his pockets.

"There ain't anything nicer than thim, yer bet," he had remarked, surrendering his gift with such a lingering reluctance that the father had straightway invited him to breakfast. He promptly accepted the invitation and ate half the fish, but strictly only half. Later Father O'Bourke had married him to pretty Norah Connelly, and christened his first boy. Joe had gone through the wedding ordeal with all his old swagger, but the first boy—ah, there he had met his Waterloo! Father O'Bourke, remembering his shame-faced pride, his abject humiliation when the baby screamed, chuckled irresistibly. But that was—bless him, that was twenty years ago! And now Norah was dead and Joe was a big man—little swaggering, freckle-faced Joe McNulty.

"But he played fair over those trout," the little priest chuckled again. "He terribly wanted another, but he wouldn't take it."

Father O'Bourke's face was all alight. Joe would tell him what to do to save this battle for his people. Joe wasn't the kind to forget. He had "played fair" when he was a barefooted little ragamuffin; now that he was a big man he would be glad of the chance to help out an ignorant old priest who knew nothing of the manufacture of

laws, though he knew so much of their operation upon poor and stunted lives.

Father O'Bourke sprang up and began flying excitedly about the room. He had no time-tables, but he would go to the station at once and see if there was a train out that night. He must see Joe the very first moment—no knowing how long it would take him to work the thing out.

As it happened, there was a train within an hour. He would reach Albany too late to see Joe that night, but at least he could get to him the first thing in the morning. With a sense of accomplished success, the little priest leaned back in the stuffy seat—he had taken a day-coach—and dreamed of his people.

At seven he was at the hotel, much to the surprise of the clerk at the desk, who informed him, in reply to his questions, that the senator breakfasted at eight but never saw any visitor before ten.

"He'll see me," the priest declared confidently. "I've come to take breakfast with him."

He settled himself in the office to wait. The morning papers were there, and he picked one of them up, but his eyes soon wandered; he was too excited to read. If he had not been he might have discovered things that would have puzzled him. As it was, with Joe McNulty's life, aims and character between his thumb and finger, he sat and thought of Rosie and Jim, and the "lady on the top flure," and of hundreds of others of whom they were the type and symbol.

The office slowly changed from a stale and empty room to a public thoroughfare. Three or four drummers passed through, loaded with sample-cases—off to catch an early train. A thin, nervous, black-haired man held a long confidential conversation with the clerk at the desk; another man, stout and pompous, blustered angrily because he could not obtain his favorite suite. Half a dozen in a bunch passed through to the dining-room; others hung about the office. The elevators were in full swing now, and Father O'Bourke

turned around to watch them. Others, too, were watching; and so it happened that at five minutes after eight some of them saw a remarkable sight—Senator McNulty striding through the room in his blackest humor, snapping off heads right and left as reporters crowded about him, suddenly waylaid by a little shabby priest with a round, wrinkled, twinkling face and kind blue eyes beaming with affection.

"I've come to take breakfast with you, Joe," the little man said. "What do you say to trout?"

For a moment the big man stared while onlookers held their breath. Then his hand came out with a grip that made the little priest wince.

"Father O'Bourke, by all the powers! Well, I reckon you *are* going to breakfast with me. Where in creation did you come from?"

And then the doors swung upon the two.

At the table McNulty picked up the menu-card like a boy. "No trout," he said disappointedly, "but they wouldn't be mountain ones anyway. What comes next? Eggs? Chops? Hot cakes?"

Very little came next for the father. He was of too simple a humility to feel embarrassment or be conscious of himself, but the place and the ways were not his place and ways; moreover, he could not eat till he knew the fate of his people. Yet he was enjoying himself, too. He had loved the impudent graceless boy thirty years before, and now the old affection gently dimmed his eyes. Or did it clear them? The little obscure parish priest, used to men worn and beaten in the battle of life, felt a thrill of pride in the assurance that breathed from this other man, the confidence of one who bent circumstances to his will. He leaned back after his simple meal with a smile of genuine pleasure on his round crinkled face.

"You're a big man, ain't you, Joe?" he asked. "Something of the sort had trickled down to me in New York, only somehow I hadn't had time to take it in. We didn't either of us guess it that night you stole my apples."

McNulty's jaws came together with a snap.

"I guessed it," he said. "I meant it then. The fellows used to taunt me because of things at home. I set my teeth and vowed I'd climb over their heads some day—climb so far they'd need glasses to see me."

Father O'Bourke chuckled. "I guess you've done it, Joe," he said.

"Yes," McNulty agreed, "I've done it." He was silent a moment, a sullen anger gathering in his eyes. "I've done it," he said passionately, "and Norah's gone, and the boy, and the game isn't worth the candle. I only keep on to whip the other fellows."

The little priest's eyes shadowed, then brightened.

"It's worth something to be able to right wrong and see justice done, Joe. It's worth something, maybe, to help a friend now and then."

McNulty gave him a curious look; he was mockingly aware of the strangeness of the conversation.

"Yes," he said after a moment, "that sounds all right, but suppose you have no friend? It's one of the prices you pay."

The little priest laughed. Down in the poverty where he was pouring out his life, none who would, no matter how hard the battle, were without two great treasures, friends and kindness; they alone of all earth's prizes could be won without money and without price. Suffering, toil, defeat, and failure but made their gold the brighter by its dingy setting.

"Nonsense, man," he said, "you've got a friend this minute, and if it's proof you're wanting, he's come to beg your help. That's the way they prove it down where I live. And they get it, too—it would half break your heart if you knew how they give down there."

McNulty's face had cleared. He pulled a check-book from his pocket.

"This is the biggest fun I've had in an age, father," he said heartily. "What is it? An organ? A new parish hall? Name the amount and it's yours."

But the little priest pushed the book away. "It isn't money I've come for, but human lives. Keep your money, Joe, boy. I want something bigger. I want *you*. I'm nothing but an ignorant priest, too busy patching up little things to do the big ones that lie at the bottom of the trouble; I see that now, but it's too late. So I've come to you to help me out—you, you little freckle-faced rascal!" with his old happy chuckle, "being the influential person of my extensive acquaintance."

McNulty laughed, too. "You always did make me feel sheepish, father," he said. "I don't know what you want, but I'm pretty sure if I've stolen your apples, you'll be pulling me to your door with the best catch of trout I've ever made. You never did appreciate the fine points of those trout, father. I've always wanted to tell you so, and now I've done it."

"I appreciated the fact that you only ate three when you wanted all the six," the little priest flashed back. "I never forgot that, Joe. You made me take the bigger of the last two, too; it was an awful struggle, but you finally took the little one. I knew then you'd grow up fair, Joe!"

McNulty rose sharply. "Let's come up to my rooms," he said. "I'm due at a committee-meeting at ten, but that's a good hour away. My quarters upstairs aren't so bad—for a man without a home. This way, and we'll dodge that swarm of reporters outside; they're sticky as flies in dog-days, just now."

The two—McNulty cutting his way sharply, the priest following—went through the now crowded dining-room and several passages to an elevator in a small hall, and three minutes later they were sitting before McNulty's fire in a room where red plush splendor achieved the desolation shared by all hotels no matter what their social rank.

Father O'Bourke, however, saw nothing except his purpose. He pulled out a wallet and took from it a newspaper clipping.

"There it is," he said. "That's what I want your help in, Joe. I stumbled on it by chance, blundering ignoramus

that I am not to know what concerned my people! You see, I'd so long ago given up hope of anything's being done for my people. And then I blundered upon this—and to-morrow's the last day. Read it—you'll understand."

McNulty did not need to read it. His sharp eyes snapped it up in one amazed glance, and then turned, angry and suspicious, upon the priest.

"Why did you bring this to me, Father O'Bourke?" he asked sharply.

"Why I told you, Joe," the priest answered, "because you're the only man of influence in all my extended acquaintance. Men of influence don't grow down on Catherine Street. Of course," his genial smile fading and wrinkles cutting across his forehead, "of course I don't know how much influence you have, Joe. If you can't do anything, you mustn't feel badly. The people won't be any worse off—poor things—they couldn't well be. But I'll tell you who will be worse off. *The men who could save this bill—and don't!* The men who are murdering the women and children crowded into those tenements, and murdering them—God save their souls!—murdering them, not from a moment's black anger and madness, but from cold, calculating, deliberate avarice!"

The anger fell away as suddenly as it had come and the kind blue eyes were full of unshadowed affection.

"But there, Joey, why don't you shut me off, boy? I'm just a prating, garrulous old priest, and you're a big man whose time I'm stealing. You don't know how glad I've been to think of you up here, Joey, with your hand on the laws. I knew there was one man who would stand for justice and honor, and keep his hands clean."

McNulty rose suddenly and walked across to the window. The priest's eyes followed him lovingly.

"Don't ye be taking it to heart if I've come on a fool's errand, Joey," he said again. "I know you would help if you could—it's not doubting ye I am, ever."

"You—excuse me, father, but I have to say it—you don't understand the sit-

uation," McNulty said, with an effort. "You see just your handful of poor people, ignorant, criminal—look at the police records for any year!—sliding down-hill faster than you can help them up. You can't deny it, father. You are wearing out your life for them, and what have you got to show for it?"

The little priest had risen, his eyes troubled and anxious. He followed McNulty to the window.

"Joey, boy," he said gently.

McNulty turned and faced him. There was a long moment of silence; then the priest's face relaxed.

"Forgive me, Joey, boy," he said simply. "For a moment I was thinking ye were in earnest, and it half broke my heart. Don't do it again, Joey. It is a black hour when you doubt a friend."

"Suppose," McNulty said, his dry lips forming the words with difficulty, "suppose you have another—friend—on the other side?"

Father O'Bourke shook his head, laughing now. "No, ye don't, ye rascal," he said, "not again. 'Tis not this friend nor that friend, ye well know, but justice and truth and honor. There's a girl down there—she looks like Norah, Joe—who is dying, dying of the dark rooms and foul air, the doctor says. There are little children, hundreds of them, who have never seen a tree or a blade of grass in their lives. It doesn't give a boy a very good start in life never to see a bit of God's green earth. No chance to steal apples, Joe, except out of barrels; and they don't often see them that way. Think what this park would mean. Oh, you can't think. It would mean that children who have never played in their lives will have a chance to learn what play is. It will mean that young people can walk together out under the sky as God meant them to, not just on filthy streets and in black halls and crowded rooms.

It will mean a bit of green for tired eyes that have forgotten—if they ever knew—what beauty means. Think if you had found Norah down there, Joey."

McNulty stood silent. With inconceivable swiftness his brain visualized scene after scene—the incredulous anger of his colleagues, the exultation of his enemies, flaring head-lines in the papers. He could hear the smooth sarcasm of Harris, the taunting triumph of Perry. He was recalled by a gentle touch upon his arm, to find Father O'Bourke's eyes, full of affection and trust, smiling into his.

"I'm going, Joey—I must catch that ten-five back. I'm going without the load I came with. Maybe you can't do anything, but I know you'll do the best you can, and I feel that you're going to succeed. The prayers of my poor people will bless you whatever you do. Good-by, Joey, boy. If some time you could find time to run down and take breakfast with an old priest—"

McNulty looked up—into the eyes of the one man in the world who believed in him.

"Thank you, father—I am coming," he said.

Two days later the Tenement-Reform Bill was passed at Albany, after a speech from Senator McNulty that set the country ringing. Down in the editorial rooms of the *Citizen* a thin excited man was darting about like a live spark.

"I'm making my apologies to the American people," he explained to the visitor whom he found waiting in his den. "Finest people in the world. Lord, Jack, wasn't it great? This is *living*."

Down on Catherine Street a shabby little priest was trotting along with a rabble of children at his heels. He was going to shame Jim Donovan for beating his wife.

An INTERMITTENT ENGAGEMENT

By George Lee Burton



OW often have you been engaged, Nell?"

"It is difficult to say exactly. I was engaged to one man four times."

"Four times!"

"Yes: would they count as four engagements, or as one intermittent engagement?"

"Let me have the facts, as the lawyers say; then I can decide. Who was he?"

"The wealthiest suitor I ever had."

"That doesn't sound objectionable; did you break the engagement because of that?"

"No, in spite of the fact."

"But why?"

"Because I did not love him, Betty."

"Were four engagements necessary to——"

"Don't; that's unkind. You see it was a chance at Aladdin's lamp in the twentieth century—every possible money-wish gratified. I kept hoping we three might live happily together."

"You three?"

"Yes; he and I and the money."

"It is hard to decline an attractive proposal, I know. What kind was he?"

"I met him that first year you spent abroad; he had been here very little before that. He was eminently respectable, but stolid and complacently self-conscious, with no sense of humor."

"Couldn't you make him interesting at all?"

"I felt perfectly exhausted after a two-hours' call."

"Poor girl!"

"Yet he was not so bad. I grew really fond of him in a way that did not demand ever seeing much of him, and did demand never seeing very much of him."

"How did it happen?"

"As usual; notice, interest, investigation, and devotion. Then he used to lapse into contemplative silences when we were alone, before he finally brought himself to the point of addressing me."

"Thrilling!"

"You need not laugh at him, Betty; the other girls were all willing to receive his stares."

"Yes, dear; did you like them?"

"No, they got on my nerves. He was an uncanny sort of suitor, with his solemn eyes looking out of that great immobile sallow face. But his gaze was not unkindly, only uncertain and speculative."

"Fascinating! What did he say at last?"

"'Miss Nellie'—I despise being called 'Miss Nellie'—I have been contemplating matrimony for some time. I once thought I should never marry, but now I have decided otherwise; in fact I may say that this last decision was reached after I met you.' Wasn't that gracious?"

"Quite; I hope you showed appreciation."

"I laughed; I could not help it. Then, 'How interesting!' I bubbled between ripples."

"Did that stop him?"

"No, only checked him for a moment, as if he were not quite certain that all

was going well. But he resumed after a pauseful stare, and did not stop until he had gravely and calmly offered himself, with the implication in his manner that of course I knew how very worth while he was."

"You responded fittingly?"

"I accepted him, and he produced a quaint old gem of a ring, as if he had had no doubt of my acceptance."

"He wasn't absolutely stupid, was he?"

"Betty! The ring was elaborately carved and chiseled, with a quaint unknown lettering running around the band in characters that stood out from a background of endlessly interlaced lines and curves. The setting was a great magnificent diamond which seemed flawless except for some scratches on certain lower facets; but the cutting might have been criticized on account of those facets being so comparatively large. I confess that at first the size of the stone and those defects suggested an imitation, but its beauty and a thought of his wealth dismissed that idea."

"What did he say, Nell?"

"Nothing endearing—only, 'May you understand its message,' solemnly, as he put the ring upon my finger."

"Its message?"

"Yes; I could not for the life of me determine what he meant, and was on the verge of asking whether it was 'Love and devotion' or 'Gold and diamonds.'"

"But did not?"

"No, and he soon went off apparently dazed because I would not kiss him, yet satisfied with himself and happy in his impassive way."

"Why not?"

"Yes, why not?"

"Did you love him then?"

"Betty! There was something very attractive about him."

"Ah, yes; I understand. And then?"

"When he came back the next evening, he did not look the radiant joy he should have felt. I was wearing my most becoming gown, and know I showed the beaming satisfaction of conquest. Two others were there when he

came, but they did not suspect him to be a newly betrothed; his manner did not betray him in the least."

"He was still self-contained?"

"Perfectly; you never saw more completely mastered emotion. One of the others was of the scintillating variety, but I was impartial and worked hard to have all appear to advantage and to make my betrothed feel pride in his beloved. However he shone best as a solid background, not wholly unappreciative but always grave."

"Did he wake up after the others left?"

"Yes, surprisingly."

"Surprisingly?"

"Oh, he was atrocious! I do not like to think of it."

"What did he say, dear?"

"Well, Betty, you mustn't ever breathe this confidence, not even to yourself, or I'll never speak to you again—never!"

"You can trust me; this is serious, I see."

"Serious? It was the most serious moment you can imagine."

"What did the creature say, darling?"

"Don't call him that; he isn't a bad kind. He failed to brighten and appear relieved, as he was expected to do after the others departed. Instead, his gloom increased with each of my hard-forced efforts. I tried the gay, the semi-serious, the thoughtful, and the deferentially interrogative; but I got only monosyllables and absorbed stares. These latter were finally divided between me and the fire in the open grate."

"Delightful!"

"You think so? At last in desperation I ceased, and after a pause of ninety-three counted seconds, I said: 'You seem very thoughtful this evening, Mr. Archer; what is the matter?'"

"His answer?"

"He had been looking at the flame in the grate, but now slowly transferred his gaze to me and sighed. 'I've been thinking,' he replied after finishing his deliberate sigh, 'of the gravity of matrimonial choice and of the responsibilities of married life. It is a very serious

thing—this getting married.' And he sighed again. 'Indeed it is,' I answered.

"Did you smile at all?"

"No, Betty; I could not imagine what was coming next, but I did not feel in a humorous mood."

"What did come next?"

"A very serious thing," he repeated, and sighed a third long sigh, a deep sustained respiration that kept you holding your breath until he got fairly through with it. Then he continued to look at me in silence until I could not endure it a moment longer and said with a show of lightness: 'If that's the view you take of it, Mr. Archer'—answering his sighs rather than his words—"I'll release you."

"What *did* he say?"

"The tension broke at once; he sat up with the most instantly relieved expression and replied with quite indecent haste: 'Thank you, Miss Nellie; I accept your kind suggestion. You're a fine girl, but I believe I made a mistake in my decision.'"

"Well, I never!"

"Nor I either."

"What *did* you do?"

"The next pause was even more awkward than the others, if possible, though I tried to laugh naturally as I presently said, drawing off his quaint old beauty of a ring and handing it back to him: 'Now you are disengaged, and I hope you will "live happily ever after," as the old stories put it.'"

"Brave girl!"

"He appeared relieved but a trifle suspicious, I thought; yet I could not tell whether he suspected a mistake on his part or on mine. He gazed down at the ring, turning it over in his hand, for a full minute; then glanced up at me with a look of disappointment, almost of pity. Presently he said in solemn, kindly fashion: 'I wish you joy also, for you are the only girl I was ever engaged to.' 'But after all, we require a separate happiness; so goodbye, and don't forget to be glad,' I replied."

"Did he go then?"

"No, he did not seem quite ready—

as if he found the situation rather interesting when safety was insured. But after I had led him through a half-hour's grave impersonal discussion of the joys of freedom, he finally left, still apparently wrapped in some uncertainty."

"Poor Nell!"

"Don't commiserate me."

"Of course not; he soon came back?"

"Yes, in ten days he was there again, with a confident, almost happy, gleam in his eye instead of the old cautious uncertainty. He told me that although he still felt it was something of a risk and that married life had great responsibilities, he had decided that I could have him for keeps."

"Did he say that?"

"Not exactly; but that is what he meant."

"And you?"

"I demurred. 'I'm not sure I can ever care enough for you,' I responded. 'While I appreciate your sacrificial devotion, I can accept only on one condition.' 'Very well; what's that?' he asked, almost self-forgetfully. 'Upon the condition that I may break our engagement at any time without notice or reproaches.'"

"That did not sound enthusiastic."

"No, Betty, but remember the previous experience—and his unattractiveness, too."

"Did he hesitate?"

"Not at all. 'Certainly; on your own terms,' he replied, 'for I want you on any terms, my dear.' His look and tone were quite appealing; he was so sincere that for a minute I was actually fond of him and it seemed quite possible."

"Did he give you the same ring?"

"Yes; he had it with him, seemed always to carry it, though I never saw him wear it. As he placed it again on my finger, he again said solemnly: 'May you understand its message.'"

"Did you understand this time?"

"No, and asked: 'What do you mean?' 'I may not say,' he answered. 'The ring was given me by my father when I was twenty-one; the message is not mine.'"

"He tried to be mysterious."

"He did not impress me in that way; he seemed so terribly in earnest. This excited my curiosity somewhat, so when I was alone I examined the ring most carefully, and finally took a tracing of the characters to get help in deciphering them."

"What were they like?"

"This; I studied over them until I could draw them in the dark:

[REPRODUCED]

"I don't make anything of that."

"Neither did I, unaided. I occasionally alluded to the subject and tried to draw him out, but did not succeed. He was always courteous, but always declined to discuss the matter."

"Did your new affection for him last?"

"Not long, for after all there was no congeniality. It lasted only until the symphony concert."

"How did that affect matters?"

"He gave me a lovely dinner at the club, followed by a box party, with his aunt as chaperon. The appointments and flowers were exquisite, but the other guests were not well chosen, and the dinner was rather a bore, despite the beauty of it all. I had to work hard to make it even half a success. Finally in the box at the concert I settled myself for a restful enjoyable time when the music began."

"You surely enjoyed that?"

"Not entirely, as you shall hear. The music was beautiful, and all went well until half the program had been given and they were nearly through Tschai-kowsky's Pathetic Symphony. Mr. Archer and I were sitting in front in the most conspicuous box, and although the lights were low, the occupants of the boxes could be plainly seen from all parts of the house. I had been absorbed in that last movement, but happened to glance over to the opposite box and saw those horrid Edgerly girls shaking with silent laughter while their escorts were in a broad grin, all looking at our box. I turned around quickly in time to see Mr. Archer's drooped head,

closed eyes, and slightly opened mouth, and to hear a gentle snore."

"No!"

"Yes; and as for a second I gazed paralyzed he relaxed still more, and the opera-glasses he had been holding—my opera-glasses—dropped to the floor with a thud that could be heard thirty feet away; then he jerked himself awake with a start."

"Impossible! Did others notice it?"

"Most assuredly; smiles and glances were exchanged by many of those near us, and his aunt had made a motion to touch him with her fan. I was so mortified I did not know what to do. The woe of that last Tschai-kowsky movement seemed piercing me through and through. It was bad enough for him to make himself ridiculous; but to make me ridiculous, too! Of course I was not talking to him, and he is not musical; but to go to sleep at my elbow before a thousand persons!"

"What did you do, Nell?"

"I leaned over and said softly: 'Our engagement is off. You see our tastes are not the same.'"

"That was hard when he was being so closely watched and could not talk back."

"Perhaps; but think of my position. I was thoroughly indignant."

"How did he take it?"

"He did not go to sleep any more, but appeared in the depths of shame and contrition. I confess I felt somewhat sorry for him, and finally told him for his own self-protection to take heart and smile a little, and to try to listen to the music—which he did like a great subdued boy after a whipping. Later when we were passing out of the box after the concert and were unobserved, I handed him back his ring. He started to protest, but I said sweetly: 'Don't make a scene,' and checking himself he slipped the ring into his pocket. But I fancied in his look of protestation a trace of compassion, which puzzled me greatly; for he seemed scarcely in a position to commiserate me."

"Perhaps he sympathized with your mortification over his nap. Did he apologize later?"

"Rather; I never saw humility impersonated before. However, each time I considered forgiving him some one would smilingly speak of it, ask after my musical friend or inquire how I enjoyed the concert. The Edgerly girls said they wished to give us a Tchaikowsky musical, and told me that Fred Williams had decided to send me opera-glasses for a Christmas present. These little incidents kept me in an unforgiving state of mind that did not favor my former fiancé."

"I don't wonder. But at last you forgave him?"

"Yes, I finally had to; he haunted me so, begging so earnestly and so wretchedly; and he was generous and kind in his way."

"So then you entered upon the third stage of your engagement?"

"Don't speak in that tone, Betty, or I shall stop right here. You sound positively metallic."

"How you misjudge me; I'm all sympathy. Did he use the same ring each time?"

"Yes; the ring seemed to have a personality of its own, it was so beautiful and quaint, and the recurring experience suggested meeting an old friend. This time he once more repeated the phrase: 'May you understand its message.'"

"Dear me!"

"However, I had prepared for him this time. When I saw this renewal was coming I sent my tracing to a linguist and had his opinion; so now I looked up sweetly and answered: 'I understand it at last; its message is *yourself*.' You should have seen how happy he looked then; his face lighted triumphantly, though why I could not tell."

"What did you mean?"

"Literally what I said. Do you know those characters were simply runes spelling '*Reheralcumas*,' his name, read from right to left."

"How odd! What did he say to that?"

"I am so glad. My father, who has been dead many years, made me promise to use it as an engagement-ring, placing it with those words. Tell me

explicitly what it says to you.' 'Samuel Archer; yourself, done in pure gold and ancient runic tracing; a constant reminder of worth and value. I had it deciphered recently.'"

"Did he appear satisfied?"

"No; for his face fell as he answered: 'Is that all it means to you?' 'Isn't that enough?' I replied lightly. 'My sage had no more to report.' For answer he simply sighed and looked away."

"A cheerful soul! So you were definitely engaged once more. You felt you loved him then, didn't you?"

"Betty!"

"Proceed, Nell; I'll be good."

"At the eleventh hour; I prefer the all-day pious."

"Don't; my heart is with you, though my tongue sometimes slips away. How long was the third stage, dear?"

"Until the football-game."

"Football?"

"He took me to a game in his new motor, with his aunt and another old lady in the tonneau. It was a glorious afternoon, but I did not feel uplifted. I had seen more of him than of any one else for several previous days; I had seen so much of him that I found my brain becoming atrophied. I grew silent as we went out and thought how unbearable it would be, if I should marry him, unless outsiders came in to relieve the tedium. Think of having always to keep your house filled with company to make your husband endurable!"

"Think of it!"

"As we went out he talked soberly of his new machine and corner lots and the persons we saw; but even the crowd of thousands of more or less eager faces at the field did not arouse in him any youthful enthusiasm."

"Did you enjoy it?"

"The crowd was fascinating; I counted near us nineteen young couples that seemed congenial and happy, and shivered in pity over my own lonely condition, until he broke the silence by remarking: 'Good crowd, isn't it?' 'Fine; did you ever see more enthusiasm?' I responded. 'It does appear to

be a good-humored crowd,' he returned. 'Yes,' I replied, 'so many couples look youthfully happy, and so many others sagely satisfied.' 'The gate-receipts ought to satisfy at any rate, with such a crowd. I never cared much for football when I was at college, but the game was not then what it is now. There was then——' But I had become interested in watching a couple near us and had ceased to listen to his account."

"You?"

"Yes, I felt off duty that day. It would have warmed your heart toward them and your first sweetheart days to have seen how happy they appeared and how interested in each other."

"Did your couple see that you were watching them?"

"No, they were too absorbed in the game and in each other. How they did cheer when an especially brilliant play was made! Their enthusiasm and perfect enjoyment together were lovely; the contrast between them and us was too great. It quite spoiled our engagement and I told my fiancé so that evening, handing him back his ring. He took it rather mournfully, but almost tenderly, as if it were a living thing, remarking: 'I wish I were like my father; he was a clever man.'"

"Then he was not entirely self-satisfied?"

"Apparently not."

"And came back, after all that?"

"Yes, in a fortnight."

"Just could not stay away? How cruel you are!"

"Hush, my dear; you don't understand at all. This time I discouraged him steadily; I felt so sorry for him that I told him not to try any more."

"Yet he would not listen to your advice, given in your most attractive manner?"

"He said: 'I know I am not one of those men you could love in a cottage or a four-room flat, but I thought you might find me endurable in a spacious place.'"

"Was he serious?"

"Perfectly so; it was pathetic. I was moved."

"To agree with him?"

"Almost. I told him that sounded plausible, perhaps it was true; I would try once more."

"You did not then demand the youthful enthusiastic love, but took his ring instead; did he again wish you might understand its message?"

"Yes, but I rebelled. 'You will have to tell me then; I fear I am too stupid,' I replied. 'No, you must discover it for yourself,' he rejoined, and looked so pained at my flippancy that I smiled wistfully and began studying it afresh. I managed at last to decipher on two of the under facets of the brilliant these two runes, ▽ and ▽."

"Why, those are the ones that stand for his initials in the tracing."

"Exactly. I told him so, and he began to look hopeful once more; but I could make nothing of the other scratches."

"What were they, Nell?"

"They were something like this, ▽ and ▽. I intended to submit the ring itself later to an expert, but forgot it for a time, and then planned to attend to it when I went East."

"Why didn't this engagement last?"

"He was too attentive; he meant to be lovely, but hadn't the tact to occasionally leave me alone. I finally felt like a bear led around by a chain. I stood it for two weeks, for I determined to give us both the fullest possible chance; then I saw his only hope lay in the absent treatment, and accepted an invitation to spend a month with Mrs. Shaw in New York; you know how tactful and restful she is."

"She is fine."

"Beyond question. I announced my proposed visit, and got ready as quickly as possible."

"Do you suppose he guessed why you were going?"

"Wait until you hear the rest. I left one evening after dinner, and three or four persons were kind enough to see me off—he among them, of course. It was all very pleasant, but the thing I most enjoyed was the prospect of my vacation from him. At length the call came; they all bade me farewell, he last, and the train started. I leaned

back in my section and breathed a long sigh of relief. You cannot imagine the light joyful freedom of that minute."

"Don't make me pessimistic."

"No, but I did enjoy that hour; then, tired out, I had my berth made down and slept like a child. In the morning we were surrounded by grayness and dreary mist, but in my buoyancy I did not care. I caught myself actually singing in the dressing-room as I got ready for breakfast."

"Did you sing your way through to the dining-car?"

"Hardly; but I did start toward it with the lightest of hearts and almost smiled at the conductor in my comprehensive good humor. My section was near the front of the car, and I had got down the aisle and the passage around the drawing-room to the very front door, when a man's voice at my left ear said: 'Permit me to open it for you.' I gave a little scream and nearly fainted."

"Why, Nell, that sounds perfectly courteous."

"Yes, but it was Mr. Archer's voice!"

"Mr. Archer's?"

"None other; and I thought he was hundreds of miles away."

"How did he get there?"

"That is just what I asked in dismayed astonishment, and he radiated amused satisfaction as he answered: 'I've been here all the time, back in a section at the rear of the car. I planned this as a nice little surprise, so you would not have a long tedious trip by yourself.'"

"Thoughtful!"

"Stupid! I actually leaned against the side of the car and gasped. Do you know he had quietly made all his preparations without mentioning his plans. When the others left me the evening before he followed, but instead of getting off he disappeared into the smoker for the rest of the evening."

"Your day was different from that planned."

"Don't; it was terrible. Occasionally he would go back for a cigar, but I had five hours of him, including breakfast and luncheon, by four o'clock."

"Did he see that he had made a mistake?"

"He appeared perfectly happy and satisfied with himself, as if it were all a piece of great good luck, until the crisis came shortly after four."

"The crisis?"

"We were looking out at the farming country through which we were passing, when we saw an old couple in an old wagon drawn by an old horse coming down a lane toward the track. It was the most ancient-looking couple you ever saw driving, and everything was in keeping. There was no one else in sight, and as they came soberly toward the train, the drizzling rain and the winter fields gave the finishing touch of desolation."

"Old persons need not appear desolate."

"They did, in that setting. 'Dear old things!' I exclaimed. 'How feeble they seem! They ought not to be out today.' 'Perhaps they enjoy getting out,' he replied. 'My grandfather Archer lived to be ninety-two and was quite active until he was ninety.' 'Ninety-two!' I echoed in incredulous astonishment. 'Yes, and his wife was eighty-seven; they were an energetic old couple.'"

"Think of it!"

"I did, quickly and with consternation. 'You don't really mean it?' I inquired, but I might have known he was not jesting. 'Certainly,' he answered, with such dull surprise that I knew his statements were correct."

"What did you say?"

"Nothing at first; I couldn't; but how I thought. My own grandmother lived to be seventy-eight. I was silent for so long a time that he finally asked why. 'Considering a long life and its problems,' I answered slowly; and drawing off his ring—that great beautiful stone in its mystic setting that always made me feel as if I had a marble in my glove—I handed it back to him and told him this was final. 'Let us always be friends, even if we should live to be a hundred—but nothing more,' I said. 'I see clearly now that I am not the one for you.' I had not

meant to be so abrupt, but the age question settled it. I thought of the past hours, and then of years of him. Five or ten years? Perhaps, with all conditions most favorable. But half a century? Never—never!”

“How did the poor man take it?”

“He was surprised and chagrined, naturally, for a little while, and he looked disappointed. He should have looked disappointed at what I said, but somehow I received the impression that he was also disappointed in me. After a little he asked again: ‘Are you sure this is absolutely final?’ ‘Yes, absolutely,’ I answered. ‘Perhaps it is best after all; perhaps my father was right about this; he usually was right,’ he almost soliloquized in response.”

“Why, Nell; the idea!”

“I, too, resented it and said rather stiffly: ‘What do you mean?’ Then he turned and looked at me as if he had already forgotten I was there. ‘I will tell you,’ he replied; and taking the ring from his pocket he asked me if I had ever taken the trouble to ascertain the meaning of the curved markings on the lower facets of the stone. I was compelled to acknowledge that I had got no further than the runes. ‘What are those other markings?’ I asked. ‘Stenographic words; this is “secret” and that is “springs”; now do you understand?’”

“You did?”

“No, I was surprised into stupidity for a moment, and only said: ‘No; what do they mean?’ For answer he produced a pair of tiny tweezers, and attaching them to the rune \ddagger on the golden circle he laid back about half an inch of the outer surface as a little curved door. Below, the smooth surface had been engraved; it was all a beautiful piece of workmanship. ‘How exquisite!’ I exclaimed, but he did not say a word. Instead he took from his pocket a small magnifying-glass, and placing it over the engraved surface held it for me to read. The words on the golden heart

of the ring beneath the curved door were: ‘*You can always trust him.*’”

“Like a voice from the dead.”

“Then he took hold of the rune $\&$, and lifting back another tiny curved door I read through his glass on the surface below: ‘*Spiritual affinities endure.*’”

“How unusual!”

“Spiritual affinities? I don’t know. I asked him to explain further, and he said: ‘My father had this ring made for my prospective bride, whoever she might be. ‘Wit and solidity make good partners, Sam,’ he used to say. ‘If you can get a girl who will care for you a little and be clever enough to find out the ring’s message, I think you two will get along; for she will have discernment enough to appreciate your fine qualities and love you for them.’ When we were first engaged, you showed no sign of discovering, and I became afraid it was all a mistake; later I thought I would risk it anyway; that you were bright enough for so stupid a fellow as I; that my father might have been wrong; for I loved you, Nell. But perhaps he was right; there seems no spiritual affinity.”

“He made you seem to fall short of his standard, when you had insisted he was the delinquent!”

“At first I resented that; then I wished a little wistfully that we had the spiritual affinity. He is such a fine fellow after all. I knew I did not love him, yet yearned for the sympathy and intuition and sentiment that could respond to so fine a nature. I felt somehow a spiritual inferiority, despite his lack of brilliancy. But that affinity is lacking; the message was not for me.”

“Yet, Nell, you have got so into the habit of becoming engaged, surely you will marry him some day.”

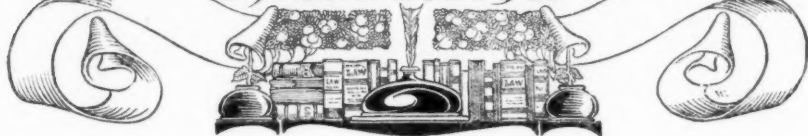
“Not without that spiritual affinity.”

“You will cultivate that, will you not?”

“Can I?”

GIDEON PEEK, PROTECTIVE

By Walter L. Sawyer



HE Commorins were giving a dinner. It had progressed very pleasantly through the six courses, and now, retreating before the cigars, the ladies had just withdrawn, and Mr. Alfred Commorin, financier and philanthropist, had begun to tell his favorite story.

Mr. Commorin was not at his best as a story-teller. He frequently had to stop and wait for the right word, introduced many details that served no purpose but to confuse his hearers, gurgled and chuckled in a most exasperating way whenever his memory got ahead of his utterance, and talked in a thin, throaty voice that sounded as if it had struggled up through layers of fat. But Mr. Commorin did not realize his deficiencies, and he relished interruption as little as any silver-tongued orator. Once or twice he impatiently waved away the butler, as that solemn functionary, who looked rather scared, tried to communicate a message. And when he did finally heed, and, with a comprehensive snarl of apology, trotted toward the portières, he wore an expression that inspired Melcher, his partner, to make a joke.

"Save that face for the next bear movement, Commorin!" Melcher called—an impromptu that took so well that, with another flash of genius, he turned to the butler.

"House on fire, Saunders?" he asked. "If it is, I'm glad I had my dinner first!"

Meanwhile the host, fuming into the hall, saw nothing on earth to make one

glad, and showed his emotions so plainly that the man who awaited him was tempted to smile. Mr. Commorin suspected that, perhaps. It made him more angry.

"Well, what does police headquarters want of me?" he snapped.

"Nothing—yet."

Mr. Commorin fell back a step and stared at the stranger who returned this odd answer. He was entirely "unofficial" in appearance; seen in a crowd, few would have honored him with a second glance. And yet that figure, a trifle taller than the average and gaunt as a country parson's, gave the banker an instantaneous impression of suppleness, alertness, and force in reserve; and as he gazed into the face, sharp in outline except for a flexible, humorous mouth, and studied the deep-set gray eyes, the strong nose and chin, and the high forehead lined with many wrinkles, he found himself longing to surprise the secret, the self-revelation that every countenance conveys—or conceals.

"Aren't you a detective?" Mr. Commorin demanded.

The stranger dismissed the word with an urbane gesture.

"That's the usual name," he said. "I prefer to call myself a protective. Anybody can help to detect and punish a crime, you know. It's not so easy to prevent one, but it has always seemed to me to be better worth while. And that brings me to the object of my intrusion," he added. "I have reason to believe that your house is to be robbed—"

"How? When? Where?"

There was something like a twinkle in the stranger's eyes as he replied.

"Unfortunately I am not yet in a position to go into details," he answered calmly. "I was sitting in an East Side saloon this afternoon, chatting with a friend of mine—formerly a very clever second-story worker—when I chanced to overhear a scrap of conversation. It came to me in confidence, as it were, so I——"

"Good heavens! You didn't arrest the villain and force the whole truth from him?" squealed Mr. Commorin.

"No. I always like to give a man a chance. There was no indication that the speaker had any personal share in the plot against you. Of course I could have taken him to headquarters, made him choose between betraying his friends and being tortured and hounded. But I prefer to deal with principals and get results in a different way."

"You, an officer of the law, sympathize with the criminal classes!" Mr. Commorin gasped.

The detective nodded and smiled.

"To a certain extent, yes," he said. "In the present case, for instance, the criminal takes the greater risk. If he succeeds, you lose nothing but money. You can get more money—and you probably have too much, anyway. If he fails, he loses liberty."

"However, we won't anticipate unpleasantness for anybody," he went on, cheerfully ignoring the symptoms of apoplexy that the banker displayed as these atrocious sentiments reached his ears. "My business is to prevent it. When an establishment like this is robbed, it is generally with the help of a confederate inside. I want to look over your household, please—and your guests, as well."

"My guests? Why, hang it, man!" Mr. Commorin sputtered; and then he paused and reflected.

Sinkinson was in the dining-room, there, and it was something like burglary, though to be sure on a very large scale, that he was accused of in the matter of the P. M. & A. Railroad; probably it would do no harm to have that eminent financier looked over. Suppose, now, he had a cultivated taste for plate? The Commorin sideboard

shone with rarities—and Sinkinson had the name of getting whatever he happened to want!

It was never difficult to arouse Mr. Commorin's suspicions against anybody; and as these thoughts crossed his mind—Sinkinson being by no means the only object—he waved the detective toward a doorway and watched anxiously as the other arranged a peephole at the side of the portières.

"All right," was the muttered report that followed a swift, keen survey. Yet the stranger's eyes were aglow with interest as he turned to the banker.

"One of your guests, Mr. Evan Davies, is one of the few men I envy!" the stranger said. "He has a unique collection of provisional issues—absolutely all the local stamps and stamped envelopes circulated in this country prior to the first government issue of 1847!"

"Eh? What? How——"

The sight of Commorin's mystified face recalled the detective to himself. He laughed and made a sign of apology.

"Pardon me," he said. "I collect postage-stamps, as well as rogues, and sometimes I forget that to most persons my hobby means nothing."

"Now, the ladies," he added briskly. "All in the drawing-room, are they? In here?"

Cautiously approaching another doorway, Mr. Commorin checked off his wife's dear friends and enemies and signified that they were all in the perspective. To the credit of the sex, the officer ran them over quickly and declared himself content. Then he turned to Mr. Commorin once more.

"Perhaps it won't be necessary to detain you any longer from your guests," he said. "I suppose the butler can be trusted to round up the servants?"

But Mr. Commorin damned his guests, in so many words, and vowed he would see the thing through. The primeval passion, the instinct of the chase, had seized upon him, and he would have felt in some sense defrauded had they made no capture. Indeed

he did look disappointed when all the staff, both aristocrats and commonalty, triumphantly survived inspection. The detective, on his part, seemed surprised and perplexed.

"Are you sure you've shown me everybody?" he urged. "Think!"

"There's Mrs.——" the butler started to hint; but his employer promptly cut him short.

"Mrs. McNair is a superior person, a highly superior person, and it would be absurd to connect her with anything of this sort," he said. "Naturally, I did not even think of her. My mother-in-law is ill, you understand, and Mrs. McNair came to us a fortnight or more ago, as her personal attendant."

"From where?"

"She referred to a Mrs. Osborne, I believe." The detective's eyes brightened. "But as a matter of fact she impressed us so favorably—the doctor included—that probably it would have been taken for granted—so very superior a woman——"

Mr. Commorin's explanation did not seem convincing, even to himself, just now, and it halted, and then came to a stop, as the detective started toward the staircase.

"Superior woman, eh?" the detective repeated cheerfully. "Sounds promising. Fools are annoying, sometimes, but seldom dangerous. I imagine it's the superior people you have to watch, in your business? Same in mine. Do we find her on the second floor?"

Silently Mr. Commorin pointed to a door in an alcove at the right. Noiselessly the detective opened it.

As he slipped through, a woman of thirty, wearing a nurse's cap and apron, came from an inner room with a tray of glasses. A tall, strong woman she was, with a pleasant, "capable" face and a self-possessed and resolute manner; nor did her actions belie her appearance. In the first moment of surprise, she hesitated for the fraction of a second. Then she walked forward and set down the tray from hands that never wavered.

"Mr. Peek!" she said. It was an exclamation in a whisper.

"Yes, Mary," the detective nodded. "This is a friendly meeting if you'll have it so. It needn't mean any trouble for Mike, either, if we have a few hours' leeway. The job wasn't to be pulled off to-night, I hope?"

"No, not to-night," she answered, after the briefest pause to weigh the words and cast a fleeting glance at her employer.

"Ah, then there'll be time to see Mike and get everything settled pleasantly."

The invalid choked and groaned. Her own embarrassments put aside, the young woman sprang to the inner room and raised her to an easier position; then, returning, drew the curtain across the communicating doorway. Mr. Commorin was nervously clicking the knob of the outer door. She frowned at him and motioned for silence.

"Good girl, Mary!" the detective said gently. "This is your work—not the other. I have a friend in Indiana who needs you for matron of his asylum. Think it over."

The young woman was staring at him, her forehead wrinkled in perplexity. "Mike'll kill you if you go bothering him," she murmured, as if, just at present, her mind would hold no other thought.

But the detective smiled reassuringly.

"That'll be all right, once he understands that I'm his friend," he replied. "When he finds that I didn't lock you up——"

But at the sound of a feeble summons the nurse had already hurried back to the inner room, and the detective stepped into the hall, signing the banker and his butler to follow.

"Better be sending for another attendant," he suggested. "I shall take Mary away, presently."

"Ahem! Ahem!" Mr. Commorin cleared his throat portentously. "I trust my ears deceived me, sir," he began. "I thought I heard you promise that you would not lock that creature up, and that everything should be settled pleasantly with Mi—er—ahem!—with her male accomplice? If you compound a felony——"

"Has anybody committed one?" There was deep anxiety in the voice, but Mr. Commorin caught a mischievous twinkle in the detective's eyes; and somehow it silenced him.

"I trust you to get your suit-case and join me here, Mary," the detective said quietly, as the young woman emerged from the sick-room. Then he turned once more to the banker, who stood glaring helplessly from one to the other. "Pay her whatever you owe her," the detective said.

"What! What! Pay a woman who was going to rob me?" At the mere thought of it Mr. Commorin stiffened with indignation.

"Not for what she may have been going to do—we make no charge for that—but for what she has done," was the placid rejoinder.

His head on one side, the detective was gazing down at the financier as a bird sometimes gazes at a bug. It was rather curious than contemptuous, that stare; yet it was compelling, also. Once focused under it, Mr. Commorin found himself successively extracting a bank-note for the woman; permitting her and the official to descend his sacred main stairway and pass his sacrosanct front door; following as meekly and mutely as a muzzled puppy on the leash; and not until it was almost too late to hint his rage and grief was the spell lifted.

"Careful of that step, Mary," the detective said as he swung her suit-case to his other hand. "Will you take my arm?"

"You, sir!" Mr. Commorin exploded suddenly, over his shoulder. "I am not at all satisfied with your management of this matter! I shall report you to your superiors! I demand your name, sir!"

The detective glanced backward and smiled.

"Have you lost anything, Mr. Commorin?" he said. "My name is Gideon Peek."

II.

It was still on the safe side of eleven o'clock when the detective, having left Mary Hurley, alias Mrs. McNair, with

his mother—a wise woman who sympathized with his crazy notions and had the tact to make herself helpful—turned townward again, and presently stood before the plate-glass front of Burkett & Co., jewelers. Burkett did not know him, though he knew Burkett; and when he leaned across the counter and muttered, "About that Commorin business," the heavy-jowled, pig-eyed proprietor promptly stopped slanging his assistant and, leading Peek into the office at the rear, closed and bolted the door between.

"Commorin? Who's Commorin? What about it? Huh?" Burkett demanded, teetering nervously above the chair to which he had motioned his visitor. "Who are you?"

"I've been inside—there at Commorin's," the detective said with an impatient gesture, and in a tone implying resentment of the questions. "I've just come from Mary Hurley," he added. "Know her, don't you? Well, she's out of it, understand? Commorin watches everybody, and he took it into his head that she was wrong. She had to get away from there, just an hour or two ago. It was that or the station-house, see?"

Frowning disgustedly, but with suspicions quieted, Burkett dropped into the chair beside his desk.

"I should thought she might have jollied 'em along," he grumbled. "If she could just hung on till to-morrow night, when Mike was goin' to turn the trick, why, then she could 'a' discharged herself—with money in her pocket, at that.

"Well, why ain't there a chance yet?" he added eagerly. "You say you work inside there?"

The detective grimaced. "I left to-night, when Mary did," he answered. "Didn't look as if it would be healthy for me to stay. She thinks it's all off. So does Mike."

"Oh, Mike and his thinks!" Burkett's face flushed, and he consigned Mike to unmentionable and protracted tortures. "If you're a friend of his—you won't be, very long, if he thinks you're chummy with Mary—why don't

you get him away from Sixth Avenue? I've found him safe places to lie low, but 'he always goes back to Riley's joint like a cat to her basket. It's all right to have friends and stick to 'em, but there's reason in all things. What? 'Course there are fly cops that know his old hang-out, and some day there'll be one turn up with nerve enough to go and get him."

The detective nodded sympathetically. He could afford to do so. He had found out all he needed to know. He was in no hurry, however; and as Burkett forgot him and lapsed into gloomy meditation, Peek scanned his surroundings and furtively studied the central figure—fence, usurer, promoter of all profitable villainies, a man of origin as indefinite as that of a blob of gutter mud, and combining the characteristic depravities of a half-dozen races, without the redeeming qualities of any. Such a man deserved no mercy. It was a pleasure to sit and point the envenomed sentences which should a little later be aimed at him.

But at one instant when the detective's mind was idle and empty, his casual glance encountered a plaque-holder that stood on a shelf within reach of his hand; and after a second glance he removed an object from the holder and bent his brows above it. A porcelain plate was the basis of the thing he looked at, a plate with a perforated rim. Around the rim was looped a slate-colored ribbon, and below this ran a circular row of tiny pictures of Queen Victoria, printed in vermilion. In the center of the circle were two slate-colored portraits, somewhat larger, of her majesty, surrounded by an uneven border of figures and characters—remnants of the postage-stamps that had been cut up to provide the portraits; and the whole medley was glued down and varnished over.

"Who did this?" the detective asked, anguish in his eyes and a suggestion of tragedy in his voice. Burkett turned his head.

"Oh, one o' my kids faked that up," he answered carelessly. "Odd, ain't it?"

"Bound to be. Only a millionaire could afford it." The detective laughed, a hollow, mirthless laugh. "The heads in this row were cut from English four-penny stamps of the 1876 issue, worth six dollars apiece. These ten-shilling stamps of 1878 were worth a hundred dollars apiece. The plate represents about four hundred dollars—not reckoning the china—or the glue!"

"Godsakes!" gasped Burkett. "And I let the kid have them stamps to chop up and play with!"

For a moment he sat wagging his head and blinking dismally at the wall. Then, heaving himself from his chair, laboriously, as if burdened with a weight of woe, he disappeared into the vault which opened at the side of his desk—returning presently with two large manila envelopes, which he placed in his visitor's hands.

"The stamps in one o' them envelopes was in a bunch o' little packages marked 'Duplicates,'" Burkett said. "I got the idea that duplicates was sort o' left-overs and didn't amount to much, so them's what I let the kid take her pick from, see?"

The detective made no answer. He had opened an envelope and was gazing at the mass of stamps within—some rare, some common, but choice specimens all, which had been torn roughly from the mounts, in many cases to their serious injury. The gummed hinges still adhered to a few, and these bore notes in a microscopic handwriting which he thought he recognized.

"The Woerishoff collection," he said. A touch of reverence was in his tone.

"Got it, first time," Burkett nodded. "That was about all there was in the old buck's safe, so after one o' the boys had had the bother of crackin' it, he collared these, out o' cussedness. I didn't know how to handle 'em, so I just laid 'em away to simmer. If you're posted on such truck, you might peddle 'em for me—what?—and get your own bit out of it. Maybe," he added, with a chuckle, "you could sell 'em to old Woerishoff himself!"

"Why not give them to him?" asked the detective innocently.

Never doubting that was a jest, Burkett started to grin. But then as a business man he bethought him that such jokes are immoral, and answered with serious intent. "Money locked up in 'em," he said.

"But that's no reason why I shouldn't give them back to Woerishoff," the detective persisted mildly.

Burkett stared at him with deep disfavor. "Oh, cut it out!" he growled. "'Tain't funny, see? You from the crazy-house?"

"I'm from headquarters," the detective answered pleasantly.

His eyes on Burkett, he extracted two elastic bands from an inner pocket, snapped them around the envelopes, and took the envelopes under his arm with an air of finality that was not lost upon the dazed observer. There had been an instant when the rascal, alternately paling and flushing, his hands working nervously, bade fair to spring and attack. But that wild impulse seemed to pass. He managed a laugh.

"They're yours, old man!" he said in a voice that strove to be genial. "Make your own play with Woerishoff, and keep all you can get. You ain't the first headquarters man I've met, and I'm always glad to throw things in their way. That's me! All the same, one good turn deserves another, and I'd kind o' like to know whether it was Mike or Mary tipped you off to the Commorin trick?"

For a moment the detective hesitated and scanned the other appraisingly. Contempt for the creature was deepening; he wondered if it was even worth while to abuse him; and yet there were some things that ought to be said.

"Neither," the detective rejoined. "I caught the name of Commorin in a saloon, decided to look over his place, found Mary, knew she generally works with Mike and that you're behind a good many of Mike's jobs, and was sure of your part in this when I heard that Mary had given the Osbornes as reference. Yes," he nodded, as Burkett choked on a curse, "I know the Osbornes are under your thumb on account of the money you loaned on

those forged notes. Perhaps you and I will go into that matter, one of these days, Burkett.

"As for these stamps"—the detective tapped the envelopes—"I'm a collector, myself, and it's a satisfaction to snatch them from a rat-hole. I shall give them back to Woerishoff. Give them. Understand? I don't deal in stolen goods, or take rewards. I don't need money. Probably I have more, anyhow, than Woerishoff—or you. I shall use some of it for the good of Mike and Mary. You've lost them, Burkett, as well as the stamps."

With manifest effort, the other made a show of nerve. "You get yours from Commorin? Tips on the market, eh?" he sneered.

The detective smiled. "I can't imagine myself making any use of Commorin," he said; "except, perhaps, if I was a farmer, I might turn him into fertilizer. I'm breaking up this particular job against him, that's all. If it's pulled off, now, by anybody, it'll mean jail for you—and stay there."

"Anything else?" The detective had risen, and paused for a last look at the villain who was glaring so balefully. "I thought at first I'd lock you up," he added, "but I'm going to let you run a while. There's no glory in trapping skunks!"

He turned to draw the bolt. It was instinct, rather than sight or hearing, that, as he dropped his hand to the knob, warned him of danger. Swiftly he leaped aside. Burkett, maddened beyond self-control, had caught up a loaded cane and aimed a blow from behind.

But it missed its mark when the detective jumped. Burkett overbalanced and reeled forward. With one bound Peek was upon him. And though Burkett was big and stout and powerful, he was like a pat of butter in the hands of his enemy.

"Your business is skinning people—let's see how you like being skinned!" the detective muttered.

His left hand over Burkett's mouth and nostrils, the detective jerked the rascal into the crook of that arm,

swinging up the kicking legs as easily as one lifts a paper bag. And, just as one tears open such a package, so did Peek burst the wrappings of Mr. Burkett.

The right hand, the one on Burkett's collar, gave a sharp half-turn and a downward pull. That was followed by the snapping of buttons and parting of stitches, and that by a sound of ripping.

It was no very violent sound, hardly louder, indeed, than the stifled snuffle from Mr. Burkett's nose. Yet it meant the rending of woolen and silk and cotton; it meant that Mr. Burkett's coat, waistcoat, shirt and undershirt were rolling up in a handful under the terrible grip—that Mr. Burkett's best business suit was being peeled from him as one might peel an orange.

Pop! That was the waistband. Held in the viselike clasp of the detective's arm, Mr. Burkett gave a last faint wriggle—and yielded every stitch of clothing but his socks and shoes. Then, swinging open the great iron door of the vault, the detective kicked his victim into the darkness, threw the remnants of clothing after him, and closed the door.

Out in the shop, a hook-nosed youth of morose and subdued aspect was lifting trays of jewelry from the window. Peek smiled at him kindly.

"Do you know the combination of the vault, my son?" the detective said. "Better take out Mr. Burkett, then, to make room for the other valuables!"

III.

Gideon Peek was a lucky man, and knew it. He had a congenial occupation, a sound digestion, a sense of humor. He was independent financially, and practically so in every other respect, for the commissioner, who both enjoyed him and believed in him, gave him a free hand and unlimited backing, requiring little but that Peek should delight his soul, sometimes, with stories of the queer things he did. For a man so placed and favored, events arrange themselves in orderly sequence

and seem to play into his hands. But never had the detective felt a clearer conviction of his luck, than he did when he found the door of Riley's lodging-house unfastened and ajar at five o'clock in the morning.

"And now if my friend hasn't changed his room!" the detective murmured as he slipped inside and up the untidy stairway. But luck was still with him, he thought, since he met nobody; and he knew Fortune for his bond-servant, when, as he rapped lightly at a certain door, a familiar voice roared out: "Who's there?"

"Police!" Peek answered, with a chuckle. He heard from within a long-drawn yawn and the sound of sluggish movement.

"Quit your foolin', Dan Riley!" grumbled the familiar voice. "Sure I doubt ye're no friend of mine, to wake me at this hour—but I s'pose I'll have to be after lettin' yez in."

The bed creaked. There was a shuffle of approaching feet. The detective braced himself. Then as the key turned in the lock he hurled his every ounce of weight against the door. Down on the floor with a reverberating thump went the unlucky man who had been in the way of it; and the detective, darting by him, snatched up a revolver that lay ready to hand on a small table, and seated himself on the side of the bed.

"Good morning, Mike," he said agreeably.

The man on the floor was taller and heavier than the detective; but as he sat up, switching his night-shirt over his massive limbs and rubbing his head, he somehow looked small as well as foolish.

"Peek!" he muttered. "Sure I t'ought it was Dan Riley, him and his jokes. Did ever one of your trade tell the truth before, I wonder!"

The large blue eyes he turned upon the detective seemed merely mirthful, now, and it was evident that they could be mild and kind; but, though Peek laughed, he did not mistake the meaning of the glance that swept the room an instant later.

"May as well get your clothes on

and be comfortable, Mike," he said. "Don't waste time looking for a weapon. I'm going to give you back your gun, as soon as you get your bearings. You're a little upset just now, you know, and you're hot-headed at the best of times, and I wouldn't want you to do anything you might be sorry for."

"Deed an' you wouldn't!" responded the giant, shaking his head humorously, as he set about dressing. "'Twas four came, the last time. One I bruk the arm of, and one the ankle, and another I smashed the nose of, agin' the wall, and on'y for the fourth one playin' foul—he hit me from behind—"

"Ye don't mean to tell me, Peek, 'tis that moldy ould ruction ye've come here about?" he checked himself to ask. "Sure there's nothin' else, is there?"

At that the detective laughed again. "I've come to notify you that the Commorin job is off," he said.

One arm in his waistcoat, the other faced about swiftly. "How do you know about the Commorin job?" he demanded.

"It's my business to know things."

"I'm thinking ye know too much, Peek."

It was said with a scowl that transfigured the broad, good-natured face; but the detective met it blithely. So far from capping the threat, he tossed the revolver upon the table from which he had taken it, and leaned back restfully against the foot-board of the bed.

"But there are some things I don't know, Mike," he went on in a meditative tone. "About you, for instance. There are times when I think you're a man. That's why I'm here this morning. Then there are other times when I think you're a chump and a coward. Which are you, anyway?"

"A coward, is ut? A coward!"

The suggestion was so unusual, so absurd and monstrous, that instead of enraging the burglar it puzzled him. He waited to hear more, leaning forward, his hands on his knees, his eyes on the visitor.

Peek nodded. "There's Mary," he said. "Fine, capable, level-headed woman. Everybody takes to her. Com-

morin wouldn't have hesitated to put her in charge of his house. She's fond of you, and faithful. And what do you do for her? Risk her liberty and happiness, if not her life, on the dirty tricks you turn for Burkett's benefit! Isn't that cowardly, to put such a woman in danger?"

Big Mike scrubbed his chin reflectively, and spoke no word.

"Want to know why I think you're a chump?" the detective resumed. "That's because you two take most of the chances and Burkett takes most of the proceeds—and you know what a rat Burkett is. You know if he finds himself in trouble and thinks he can make it easier for himself by letting you down, down you'll go!"

Still no answer. There was silence for a moment. Then, abruptly, with a glint of fun in his eyes, the giant said:

"Well, why not be after callin' up your cops?"

"What cops?"

"Sure, them ye've brought along to help take me!"

The detective smiled. "There's nobody with me, Mike," he answered. "I'm not afraid of you. If I had been, I probably wouldn't have come at all. I didn't have to come."

"Hear that, now! 'Tis yourself's a chump, I'm thinking—but you're no coward, anyway!" With a certain grim appreciation, the burglar surveyed the detective. "The cheek of the little man, to expect me to take a walk to headquarters all alone wid him! Why, Peek," with sudden fury, "them other four was after me for something I never did! Why wouldn't I fight? And d'ye think I'll go to jail for annything like that?"

"Faith, what's to prevent me from tying you up here, and cleaning out the Commorin house or another, and getting away wid it?" he demanded all at once and with a menacing movement.

"Sense—if you have any."

"What's that?" A forward step, and Big Mike's hand was on the revolver; but the detective did not flinch.

"As I told you before, the Commorin job is off," he explained patiently. "Mary's out of the house. You can't get into it in the way you planned. Say that the burglar-alarms failed to work, though, and you came off with a trunkful of jewelry, Burkett wouldn't dare to buy a collar-button.

"Let's understand each other, while we're about it, Mike." A whimsical smile played round the detective's lips, but his eyes were steady and his voice was serious. "My duty is to protect society from you. Suppose I gave you rope enough to hang yourself—let you rob Commorin, or try to do so. Well, shyster lawyers and grafting officials and Burkett would get what you stole. Then you'd go up-river, and society would be safe from you for some years, at the expense of your board.

"That's one way to put you out of business, the usual way. The other way is to nip your scheme in the bud, as I'm doing now. Then nobody loses anything—nobody but the meaner crooks, in and out of uniform, who fatten on you and your kind—and you're the biggest winner of all."

Standing within arm's reach, the burglar was toying absently with the revolver, while his forehead wrinkled in lines of indecision and perplexity.

"Sure I suppose it means a long stretch, if I do take a walk wid yous?" he said at length.

"Lifer," the other nodded.

"What?" At that word the giant awoke to frenzy. "What?" he roared again. "On'y for smashin' cops? Then I'll get me money's worth, and croak one!" He pushed the revolver up against the detective's temple.

For an instant they two looked into each other's eyes. Both faces were tense, the one with passion, the other by fearless self-control. But the burglar, as he towered above the detective, seemed for all his rage to hold himself waveringly; and the detective's arms, still folded across his chest as he reclined against the foot-board, were immovable as that unyielding surface.

For an instant the strain of conflict, the clash of spiritual forces; then—

"Sure no! I can't do it that way!" Big Mike gasped. He threw the revolver to the far side of the bed. His florid face had whitened. His stalwart frame was all a-tremble.

"You shouldn't allow yourself to get rattled, Mike," said the detective calmly. "I never do.

"My fondness for a joke will make trouble for me, some day," he added meditatively. Then he turned to the other once more. "What I ought to have said, Mike—plain talk between plain men—is that you're all right for life, now, if you'll go straight."

As if he needed the support, the giant had dropped down in a chair. He wagged his head and waved his hands, confusedly.

"I don't know what yous mean, Peek," he muttered. "But sure I'm wid yous! I'll walk!"

"See here now, Mike!" The detective sat up. The accustomed smile was in his eyes, but one who knew him would have recognized in his voice a note of earnestness and purpose.

"You can't go on playing pup for Burkett," he said. "In the first place, Burkett's about done. I tell you so, and you know I don't lie. Besides, you're too good for it. I believe you're a man, Mike! There's a friend of mine, out in Indiana, who wants one just like you.

"It's a private asylum he has, you understand. Sometimes there's need of a strong man—who isn't a brute; and a man who knows how to handle himself can be busy and useful every day, teaching patients to box, and bowling with them, and keeping them at different exercises that are good for the mind as well as the body. There's a place for Mary there, too. You'd have plenty of time to yourselves—you might take up stamp-collecting, to occupy your evenings—and good wages—"

"Have done your jokes!" Big Mike interrupted harshly. He took a step toward the door. "I'll walk wid you, now. But tell me first, where's Mary?"

"At my house, with my mother. We'll walk that way," the detective said. His eyes were twinkling at the sudden stupefaction that had overcome

the other. "If you two decide to go to Indiana," he added, "you'd better stay with me until you start."

"But—but the cops I smashed up!" Big Mike stammered.

The detective laughed. "I'll get them mended," he said. "Just let me see you the straight, square, up-standing man you can be," he went on soberly, "and——"

An elevated train clattered by, and he paused. Big Mike had turned abruptly toward the window and pressed his forehead against the pane. Now, as the street sounds slackened to comparative stillness, he spoke, in an unfamiliar, broken voice.

"I said I'd go wid yous, Peek," he murmured. "And now I'm telling you I'll stay wid yous—me and Mary!"

Nothing he had seen or heard of Mr. Commorin disposed the detective to wish for more intimate acquaintance. Yet when one afternoon, some three weeks later, they chanced to meet on lower Broadway, Mr. Commorin's manner was so cordial, not to say respectful and admiring, that Peek would have been more or less than human had he refused wholly to respond.

"Er—er—ahem!" This, following the enthusiastic tender of a fat, soft hand, was a prelude to apologies. "It has grieved me to remember, Mr. Peek, that I may have seemed curt and rude on a recent occasion when you did me a service," Mr. Commorin said. "Natural discomposure provoked—ahem!—expressions which I regret—and if I

can in any manner testify my—ahem!—appreciation—you understand——" He stopped suggestively.

"If you ever find a penny Mauritius of 1847, I shall be glad to have an option on it," the detective said seriously.

"Penny Mauritius? Postage-stamp? Exactly. I shall bear it in mind, Mr. Peek." But the great man looked a little dazed, and hastened to change the subject. "I suppose the criminals who had—er—designs upon my property have been satisfactorily taken care of?" he suggested.

"Very satisfactorily. In fact they are taking care of themselves; earning an honest living, eight hundred miles away."

"Er—ahem—yes." Mr. Commorin hesitated. Perhaps he suppressed a comment, at this point, for the detective's tone had been a trifle aggressive. But a moment later he was ready to speak, and it was evident that he tried to sound the note of good-fellowship.

"So long as police headquarters wants nothing of me, yet, as you said the other night, I should be satisfied, eh?" he cackled. "But by the way, Mr. Peek, why that word, 'yet'?"

The detective smiled. "It had no distinctly personal application, Mr. Commorin," he said. "I spoke to you as to a representative financier. I might have added that I hope and believe it will some day be the business of the police to deal with criminals of all classes."

Mr. Commorin made no answer. But the detective, gazing after him as he scuttled up Broadway, fancied that he looked aroused and thoughtful.



A GOODLY QUEST

THE gold of love, and the gems of joy,
And the silver of innocent laughter—
These are the treasures without alloy
That I am eternally after.

JOHN KENDRICK BANGS.

IN MUSICLAND

By William F. Armstrong




TSCHAIKOWSKY'S "Pique Dame" just now promises to be the chief novelty of the Metropolitan season, a novelty that that will bring out our beloved ones in an opera not of their own nationality. In this connection it is not unfit to remember that with singers Italian, German, French, each provided with works by their own masters, American artists, without American operas to aid them to easier expression, through appeal, national and temperamental, have proved adepts in all.

Now, we shall have an opportunity, interesting in more senses than one, of seeing how some foreign singers not born to the Russian purple, will meet the demands of a Muscovite music lord and his equally Muscovite subject.

Last spring and the early nights of summer, found the Continent feverish with adoration of Russian music; Paris with endless repetitions of Moussorgsky's "Boris Godounow," and Rimsky-Korsakoff's "Snegourotchka"; Berlin receiving in the inadequate confines of the old Kroll Theater, now dubbed "New Royal Playhouse," a company of Imperial Court singers from St. Petersburg and Moscow.

At the Royal Playhouse those Imperial singers gave a performance of "Pique Dame," providing food for

thought sufficient to arouse new life for Tschaikowsky, a life fuller of the national traits than we have been accustomed to accord to his music, traits which Rimsky-Korsakoff and others among his colleagues seemed more closely to claim. But we in America, except for fugitive performances of his opera "Eugen Onegin," have known but the symphonic side of Tschaikowsky's character.

In "Pique Dame" he has sounded a deeper national note, and in that he has been but natural, for in touching the subject in his libretto he has touched also a picture from the life of his people.

Pushkin's novel furnishes the foundation for his theme, the libretto being made by modest Tschaikowsky, made loosely, at times completely astray from the subject-matter. This fact the composer seems more to have felt than to have seen; when the plot flows on with directness his music shows an irresistible sweep, when that plot is diverted the score is made with a careless half-heartedness such as we give to the delaying pages of a book in which dissertation blocks the flood of absorbing events. In the love scenes, in certain tragic and unusual climaxes, we have the passion, the breadth, the sensuous beauty of the real Tschaikowsky. In other situations, made in the libretto with old-fashioned idea of contrast, he blurs over in haste to move on to the

episodes that appealingly stir him, only sometimes stopping to turn a rarely beautiful melody, a type of his best.

Some of these delaying scenes, given with the fuller resource that the Metropolitan allows, should gain accordingly, and in the pictures thus framed an excuse for their existence should be afforded. One such is in the opening act, introducing the main characters and the theme. This scene, with its variety, its changing accessory tableaux, and its spirit of life, recalls in a way the element with which Puccini, years later, had to deal in the café episode in "La Bohème."

The gay picture of this opening act, in a summer-garden, holds promenaders, officers, soldiers, women of rank, playing children, maids, a band of marching boys, and all the odd mixture of life where the waves of widely varying circles overlap on a common beach.

Against this background there enter *Hermann*, the lover, tenor; *Lisa*, female center of tenderness, and consequently soprano; *Prince Zelezky*, her betrothed; and the *Countess*, "Pique Dame" or "Queen of Spades" by sobriquet, whose uncanny knowledge of a successful combination at cards has placed her in high finance.

In this last personage the opera differs from all those with which we are familiar, a character so picturesque, so repulsive, yet so dramatic, that with her death the interest merely of love needs protean bolstering up to sustain, and leaves the final act to be upheld in splendidly picturesque unusualness by a stage filled with men, singing in sonorous, ringing ensemble.

The title rôle was played in Berlin by Mademoiselle Makaroff of Moscow, with a command so complete that she overshadowed, as the piece curiously demands, the more sympathetic parts allotted her colleagues.

This character, peculiarly Russian, we know as a type from Continental observations: a repulsive creature with the air of a *grande dame*, knowing every language but her own, as fond of diamonds as she is averse to water, and

wearing her nondescript gown as if it were an inspiration of the Rue de la Paix. A combination of vast worldly knowledge, a capacity for wickedness, and the assurance of bearing that comes along with financial resource equal to buying respect on being found out.

Some pessimistic, but observant male writers have flippantly said that the devil is a woman; it remained for Pushkin to realize the incarnation. Picking here and there the determining qualities of her intellectual machinery, modest Tschaikowsky has not done badly in giving us a striking hint of Pushkin's *Countess*, but to deliver her in her grotesque intensity much remains for the actress who gives the impersonation. In realizing this aspect, the Berlin performance was inestimably fortunate in Mademoiselle Makaroff.

Determined to become possessed of the card secret, and through the wealth it will bring him, of *Lisa*, already betrothed to *Prince Zelezky*, *Hermann* makes his way to the *Countess*' chamber to force the knowledge from her. It is a plan that, perhaps, only a Russian brain could suggest and execute, but such a thing, like other intricate workings of nature, must be accepted as a phenomenon to be reasoned out by those who devote their lives to like matters.

This scene *Hermann* has vocally almost alone, and to music of a power that carries over the footlights and back again in tensely that Tschaikowsky knew how to create.

Leading up to it there is passionate music at the close of the act which precedes it, in which a man pleads with a woman, already his at heart, to come to him body as well as soul. In its savagery it makes Gounod's love music in "Romeo et Juliette" seem like the tintinabulations of a schoolgirl's valedictory.

Wagner, in "Tristan und Isolde," said, perhaps, the last word in love music for some time to come, but it is love music with mysticism woven through it, as subtle as dew-wet cobwebs soaked with moonshine.

This love music in "Pique Dame" has no elevation about it, it is passion in a moist, heat-soaked jungle. *Hermann* is, drunk with it yet, when he lets himself into the *Countess'* room with the key that *Lisa*, drunk too, has provided. He is insane from it when he begs, pleads, then threatens the *Countess* with death if she refuses the secret. He is still mad drunk with it when she shivers back dead from fright, and *Lisa*, suddenly sobered by the sight as she enters, accuses him of murder.

Prior to this scene comes one of the most unusual yet dramatic episodes that any composer has been called upon to illuminate. Not knowing that her death-dealer is hidden behind the panel, the *Countess* enters with her women, who are singing a Russian night-song, crosses the room, returns attired for bed, and crouching on a chair with her forgotten attendants behind her, croons of her life at the French court, and of her amours; the maunderings of age that pines at the tomb's gate for the body of youth to encase its undying lust in.

Her terror and prescience of tragedy at sight of the man as he suddenly stands over her; her horror of his brutal determination, and of the pistol; her final brief second of courage when all the strength in her is concentrated in the gesture for him to leave, as she collapses, all the while uttering no sound, but holding her secret better than her life; these are the situations that Makaroff carried with subtle strength that none has surpassed.

When the curtain was rung down the Berliners demanded her many times. Then she did something that only a woman could do to whom art meant more than vanity, came out in the night-gown and cap of the *Countess*; the grizzled wig, and the livid and leaden streaks of death-paint. She was still the *Countess*, making her acknowledgments with a dignity that would, perhaps, have caused St. Peter himself to grin at sight of a woman bereft of every attribute but the motive-power of her attractiveness, yet able to charm though unfit for her coffin.

The third act opens with the scene again carried by *Hermann* and the apparition of the *Countess*, carried as Pushkin and all writers true to Russian superstition and overwrought fancy have done with such realism.

Short as this episode is, it is technically perfect from the dramatic point of view and the only way out of the difficulty set by the intense situation it follows, a plunge into the supernatural.

The young officer is seated at a table in his room at the barracks. Outside the casemate windows the water flows close, black in the night. A concealed chorus above repeats the funeral hymn of the *Countess* that has rung in his ears since an irresistible power dragged him to her coffin. He peers up fearfully as the apparition floats in front of the window; starts angrily toward the door to prove ghostly knockings there another figment of his fancy, and tearing it open stands face to face with the dead.

Here is a scene that no mere vocal beauty will carry, and Caruso will find himself face to face with not only the *Countess'* ghost, but that other ghost, a more fatal one, caricature, unless some psychological illumination, hitherto undeveloped in him, comes to his sudden aid. Only a Russian, or one soaked with the knowledge of his strange contrarities, bravery, cowardice, superstition, materialism, can approach it.

The *Countess* gives him the card combination, against which her lips had been sealed in life, commits *Lisa* as wife to his keeping, and trails her shroud against the black waters as dawn creeps up. After that he is mad with the madness and unreason that Pushkin, knowing his people, knew how to paint. Tchaikowsky, one with him psychologically, follows throughout in his music, and of a gloom no man yet living could paint in tones of equal, terrible blackness.

Under the palace walls on the river, when *Hermann* casts *Lisa* off and she goes to her death, the strange power of this aspect of his writing is in evidence; then, as sudden relief from it,

comes the burst of gaiety and flamboyant melody in the gambling scene in the final act, sung by men's ringing, sonorous voices. The end comes with the apparition of the *Countess* rising through the card-table at which *Hermann*, with her combination, has won the fortune that would have made *Lisa* his, and his suicide.

Between these strong situations there are thrust two that are weak, one hopelessly so, a fête in which *Daphne*, *Chloe*, and other Mozartian characters disport in a ballet, roudades, and trills. The other is a scene between *Pauline*, contralto, *Lisa*, and a group of girls, and containing two charming songs, but needing the touch of the Paris Comique and its small auditorium to sustain the intimate atmosphere.

In these two episodes Tchaikowsky has dropped from his direct flight, as an eagle losing sight of the sun falls to pick shining pebbles from a beach; the fatal tendency of the Russian who ignores form for effect, and loses both in the hodgepodge of chaos.

Still, even with these blunders, the colorful strength and effectiveness of the score, sung as those Russians sang it, should carry "Pique Dame" a long way in public interest.

Even the leaves in the sunshine are quiet at Vésinet. Once a week, on Sunday afternoons, the village band plays old-time airs in the pavilion on a broad-spreading green. Beyond that, the trains creeping in and out of the station or occasional rolling wheels bearing people to and from this single link with an outside world are the only evidence of another life than the quiet, drowsy one within its confines.

Midway in the villa settlement, not far from the highway to Rouen, and at a point where the Boulevard du Midi loses itself in a grassy plain, lives Madame Cécile Chaminade, the foremost woman composer of France.

About her white villa is a garden, full with tall trees and blooming flowerbeds, between lawns that make another emerald in the chain binding Vésinet together. The figure of the composer

flitting about among her roses, is slight and energetic as that of a little gray wren. In the daytime she is cultivating closer acquaintance with her garden or slipping away in the late afternoon to Paris, to play the accompaniments to her songs that some artist is singing. Then, in the still night, with the great sky above Vésinet soft and circled with stars, a long shaft of light from her study window tells that she is at work, until the outstretching lamp-glow grows pale against the stronger rays of the dawn.

For years there has been a desire for her to visit America, where her music has a wide popularity; sometimes she has agreed to come, then two reasons have prevented almost at the moment of sailing—the journey, which is a Jules Verne one to the French, and the great age of her mother, from whom she has never been separated for more than a week in her life.

This year, with many misgivings, she has finally entrusted herself to the dual risk. Not that she is unused to journeys, for already she has made her music known as far Eastward as Constantinople, where the Sultan, appreciative of femininity with talent as well as without it, granted her the *Chefakat de Turquie*. In Germany, Switzerland, France, and England she has concertized with her own music indefatigably.

The French bring up their children with a charming sense of earnestness; you will find that same earnestness clinging to the French artist throughout her career. This being reared to the serious side of things, unfortunately so remote from the American plan, leaves a docility in every undertaking, a doing it because it seems the only logical thing to be done. And that is Madame Chaminade's view of life and her music. It is the task for which she has been sent into the world, her very reason for existence since the day when Bizet, who lived within sight of the Chaminade villa, looked first with amusement, then with seriousness, through the compositions that the little girl, still in short frocks, had brought with her for scrutiny. His dictum that

she had talent, that her future lay in composing, settled the question for all time.

Since then she has toiled as few men or women, have courage to do. Over one hundred piano-pieces, more than one hundred and fifty songs, orchestral numbers, numbers for piano and stringed and wood instruments, are in the sum of her compositions. The whole power of her being is concentrated on that one thing in life to her, work.

She, herself, speaks of her experiences in an impersonal way, without seeing the humorous side, for sense of humor is not part of her nature which is all seriousness. Nothing humorous seems to have come within the sphere of her experience, only time and inclination for intense purpose. But Madame Chaminade is vital evidence of what supreme concentration will do for one, even with frail physique. Hers is the iron power of nerves, will, and energy.

At first the music she composed was looked on with amusement or a shrug of the shoulders, which the French know how to make more exasperating than mere words, and the intimation that the work, far too good for a woman, was likely that of her master. Presently it became too prolific in output, too strongly marked as the work of a fresh hand and mind, to be attributed to Savard, her teacher; consequently it must be the work of the woman. They set about, reluctantly at first—for no public, least of all a Parisian one, likes to see its opinion nullified—to acknowledge it.

Twelve years ago, in London, where I first met her, Madame Chaminade allowed herself the only complaint on the subject, more regret than complaint, when she compared the position of American women to that given to her sex in France, "where they think women can accomplish so little."

But already her own path was easier, her music strongly popular, and her ballet "Callirrhoe," brought out seven years earlier at Lyons, had received well on to one hundred performances.

In her quick perception of the practical side of things, Madame Chaminade seems more American than French, until we stop to remember that the French are the most practical people in the world.

Of late years, in addition to her other travels, she has spent the winters at Lyons, the scene of her first recognition. The result of these journeys she spoke of one morning last summer as we walked together at Vésinet among her flower-beds.

"For two weeks after a journey I rest from writing, and then the unquenchable desire to do something comes over me. The song, or whatever it may be, flashes into my mind before a note goes down upon paper. Then, when everything is still, in the night, when even the thought of the world seems quiet, and that I alone am awake in it, I write, thinking faster than my pen can follow me.

"After a rest from all thought of what I have done, I go back to it, change, correct, criticize, as one can only do in calmer moments, when the spell of creativeness is out of the brain. But I never force myself to write. It may be two months or three that I compose nothing, I wait until I thirst for it; to go at it otherwise might mean black notes on white paper, but it would never mean music."

Some charming prima donnas, and others who may be so, even though they have failed to turn that side of their genius outward, might be puzzled to recognize the difference between a Dresden China shepherdess and a marble by Praxiteles. In this aspect Miss Emmy Destinn stands apart; in art she is a connoisseur. Nor is this art love of hers a figment of accepted manufacture; her collection of old pianos of all makes and epochs, her precious Fragonards, Bouchets, and kindred tangibilities in her home at Prague, would make her an art affinity to the most fervid.

Her spare time is spent in searching for the antique and unusual, and once impressed with an art work, she cannot

sleep until its attainment brings peace. "It is like a sickness, until I get the work, once I have seen it."

To know the genuineness of her bent, for she is no mere amateur in appreciation, you have only to talk with her on a gray London afternoon at her home in Albany Terrace, where she spends the weeks of her engagement at Covent Garden.

Hers is a rarely frank manner, after she has dropped the barrier which she creates against misunderstanding. In such moments, if Miss Destinn thinks a thing she says it. She has a trick of resting her chin on the backs of her hands, clasped tightly together on the arm of a sofa, and looking up into your eyes as she puts questions, rather numerous ones, which Ananias himself, under such conditions, would truthfully answer.

This newest accession to the ranks of New York prima donnas, where once we had mainly familiar, but now mainly strange ones, is a beauty of the Czech type, with dark eyes, set rather closely together, thick, dark-brown hair, a full, fine figure, and a smile, after she has read you, that softens her expression with sympathy of the trustful kind that men carry about in memory as old ladies treasure darning-gourds in their work-baskets.

Like many self-reliant, apparently cold women, under her outer reserve there is the true appreciation of interest and sympathy. It was talking over the pros and cons, economically speaking, of taking her motor-car to New York or buying one there, that brought this phase to the surface.

"You have a good heart," she said, when I had ended advising her, with the wisdom of one whose knowledge of such heaven-sent things is confined to the smell of the gasoline. But it was my only way of showing appreciation of that unforgettable attitude, her chin on her hands, and her eyes full of transparent lights, and I knew that most likely her mind was already made up, so that no suggestion of mine could result in complications.

"And you race?"

10

"Race!" she echoed, alarm sending new charm into her eyes. "Never! I was in a motor accident once, in Berlin. My car and another car flew at each other, and the glass of both flew into my face. That was enough. To and fro between the opera-house and home, that will be my track. When I work I have little time for anything else."

"But your interest in art?"

The answer was that of the connoisseur and the woman. "To make my home beautiful. I love it, it is the heaven of my happiness, after eight months of singing every year, and there I am near my father, whom I adore most of all people in the world. I have three brothers, but they are all younger than I, and don't interest me. But my sister, without her I should go hang myself. I have worked since I was five years old. Do you know what that means to have worked, day in and out, since you can first barely remember? At five they started to make me a concert violinist; at sixteen my voice was discovered. Madame Maria Destinn trained me; she was a great artist at La Scala, and the friend of Verdi. At twenty, taking her name, I was a prima donna; the Royal Opera in Berlin was my first and last engagement; the others are transient ones on leave of absence; this is the single time the emperor has allowed me away in the winter."

"Since I was five, I have worked." A recollection of the wistful expression with which the words were given, as if recalling irrevocable, toil-spent youth, came back, as did another allusion: "I have learned three languages, German, French, Italian; being of Prague I had only Bohemian to begin with. I no longer have keen desire to take up another; in six London summers I have caught but seven words. 'Do I want to sing always?' God forbid!" The tone was too fervent to doubt its sincerity.

"Since five I have worked, and now I am thirty," she added, with utter frankness, and without desire to hide the one secret that many women and most men will lie to conceal. "I want

to stop singing, a spinster, and *live when*—there was a crescendo of enthusiasm, then a brief pause, and she went on without urging, even by a look—"when I am forty. Why don't the old women of fifty give up and rest, instead of taking the bread out of young singers' mouths?" It is often-times a beautiful trait in a woman that she asks a question for the purpose of answering it herself. Many situations are relieved of embarrassment by the plan. The present was one of them. "And the public, what does it think to allow it? And the everlasting din of the critics crying that this or that young girl does not sing as this or that antique does, when the antique can no longer give two good consecutive tones?"

"Shall you quote that? From my heart! When the day is done, it is done. When the light fades out it is night. Go while your way is bright, that you may go surely and royally." She rose as she spoke, for a prima donna unburdens her heart best in that attitude; all her great situations are sung in it.

"And Aïda?" The pose had unconsciously suggested it. "I sing any rôle that is given me. Here in London I wanted to make my début in 'Madame Butterfly,' and they gave me 'Aïda,' which I do not care for, not nearly so much. But once in a rôle, well, my interest carries me along with it. My favorite parts are in 'Madame Butterfly' and 'Flying Dutchman.' Italian music I find natural; Wagner at most times unnatural.

"But tell me, the American women dress beautifully? Yes?"

There was a little pause of feminine appreciation after the affirmative, a pause that conjecture explained as given to some swift mental sartorial designs of her own.

"But I work all the time, and go about mostly in negligées. I go out only in a motor. Don't you think that sensible? One doesn't have to dress then. Do you know?"—her head was resting on her hands again, in her eyes was the charm which accompanies the making of a confidence—"I'd not wear anything if I didn't have to."



LOVE-SONG

CALM as the summer sea, whose soft caress
Touches the golden sands of tropic shores,
Fierce and relentless as the tidal wave,

Primitive, savage, scorning mankind's laws,
Wonderful, all-absorbing, pure, divine,
Such is my love for you, O "Heart of Mine."

Soft as the moon's pale rays, on forest glades,

Sweet as the scent of countless roses grown
In some enchanted fairy garden, where

Titania sits upon her cobweb throne,

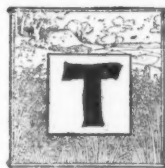
Placid, serene, naïve, yet strong and free,

Such is my "Heart's Desire's" love for me.

ROGER LAMSON, JR.

PASSING BY

By Owen Oliver



THE editor and proprietor of the *Weekly Magazine* had just finished dividing a pile of manuscripts into two heaps, a large and a small, when Miss Nugent, the sub-editor, entered.

"I think these will do," he said, nodding at the small heap in the armchair beside his desk. It was the week before Christmas, and the New Year's number had to be made up.

Miss Nugent picked up the favored manuscripts and sat down in their place as if it belonged to her. After studying them for a few moments she searched through the heap of the rejected, picked one out, and held it up: "Passing By. The Story of a New Year's Resolution. By Alice Kenway."

"You're not going to return this?" she said, with evident disapproval. "Mrs. Kenway's?"

The editor shrugged his shoulders deprecatingly. They had a mutual weakness for that dear old authoress and her works.

"She can't complain of a rejection once in a way," he apologized. "We've just accepted her serial, and we take nearly everything she sends."

"I wasn't thinking of her," said the sub-editor. "I was thinking of the story. What's the matter with it?"

"It's almost a sermon," the editor protested.

The sub-editor shrugged her shoulders in turn—only her shrug was aggressive—and bit her lips lightly as she dipped into the story here and there. The editor watched her with an amused smile, well knowing that she was seeking for some ground to controvert him,

and knowing also that his position was impregnable. They were great friends in their cool, comradelike fashion, and had been friends since she was a baby. Her father had been the editor's tutor at Cambridge; and when the professor died and left nothing but learned, impractical treatises, and a learned, impractical daughter of three and twenty behind him, the editor had taken the girl, who had just left Girton, on the staff of the *Weekly Magazine*, which was then struggling for existence.

That was six years before, and in those six years the paper had developed into the first of the weeklies, and the girl had developed into an incisive journalist, a keen editor, and a judicious woman of business. The editor consulted her—and no one else—even upon the policy of the paper; and it was she who had invented the sub-title, "a sensible journal for sensible people." She had no sentiment in her, she always said; and the editor believed her. In appearance she was tall, well-figured, and distinctly good-looking in a rather severe style; a manly woman, but not unwomanly; and very womanly in the craft of getting her own way.

"Well," she said at last, "what if it is? We all preach ourselves a sermon once a year."

"Do we?" The editor laughed a little. The idea of either of them preaching amused him. "If you'll preach me a sermon I'll publish it."

"Publish one that preaches to me instead," she retorted, without smiling.

"To you?" He raised his eyebrows. "You don't really mean?" She nodded gravely. "It goes in then. I'm not trying to back out, but just for curiosity, why are you so keen on publishing it?"

"It's a good story."

"Umph! Isn't it rather—thin? Thinner than a story ought to be?"

"Most of our stories are. That's the point of it." She drew an impatient breath, and he looked at her curiously. "Yes," she owned, answering his look. "It's hit me. It ought to hit you. Did you read the end?"

"No," he confessed, "only the first page or so. Let's have a look at it."

She handed it over, and he read the conclusion aloud.

"The point of this little story of a high resolve lies in its achievement—which is rare with human resolution. Life is full of aspirations to be realized, but we obstinately and blindly refuse to take the means that life offers to realize them. We all have our pregnant little ideals, we all hold our little plots of reality, only we will not set the seeds in the garden, but try to grow them without soil of earth.

"The goal that we reach for—and how our hearts stretch out!—is some far-off, divine event; and so we look for a road in the skies, instead of underneath our feet. We vow our hands to a deed 'out of our star'; give our hearts to a creature of our dreams. And every day some deed that wants doing nods vainly to us; every day some one worth loving is passing by! 'The light that never was on land or sea.' You could find it in some dear eyes that look into yours every day, if you only knew! Look for your heart's desire in the world, not over it. Have your aspirations *here*! That is the moral of my story."

"How like her!" the editor said when he had finished reading. "She sees stars in all the rain-splashes! It's wicked to reject anything of hers, and you've saved me from a crime. All the same it's right over the heads of our readers, our 'sensible people.' You're a 'sensible person.' Do you believe it?"

"Do you *dis*believe it?" the sub-editor asked defiantly.

"That some of us sensible, worldly men and women—on my soul, I thought you and I were—aim at 'divine events afar'? I suppose we do—sometimes!"

"And miss them?" There was a full note in her voice.

"And miss them, of course." He sighed.

"And sigh for them," she reminded him softly. There was a moisture in

her eyes; and the editor nodded thoughtfully.

"Have we missed so much?" he asked slowly. "You and I?"

"I don't know what you have missed," she told him, looking into the fire.

"You do know," he contradicted. "Every one knows what an old bachelor nearing forty misses; and an old—a charming spinster who is still too young and good-looking to be called the opprobrious name."

"I am almost thirty," she said, resting her chin on her hand. "My looks don't matter; but I begin to wonder at what age wrinkles appear. Yes. I know."

"We all know; only we can't talk about it. You and I have been friends for many years, Una; and, please God, we'll be friends to the end of the chapter."

"Amen!"

"Can you talk to me about it?"

"I can let you talk to me, anyhow."

She turned her face a little from the electric light; and he moved the shade quietly so that she was in semidarkness.

"Thank you," she said quietly.

"Now," he said, "let us talk. What have we missed exactly? And what have we hit? We won't let our mood run away with us, and dwell only on the misses. Life has to be a compromise. We must take our gains and losses as an average."

"Some things are not comparable. You can't add up Shakespeare and a mutton-chop, and divide by two."

She still had the scholarly weakness for quotation.

"Not if you are hungry! If you don't like the idea of an average, I'll simply say that one can't have everything; and you and I have a good deal. Take my own case. I'm thirty-seven. Hitting or missing, I had to grow older than I like. But my years rest lightly on me. I am healthy and cheerful; and many are sick and sorry. I am vigorous and active. I haven't even grown stout; and if my parting is a little pronounced—you found out about the hair-restorer, so I won't try to disguise it."

"Don't!" she entreated. "If I open my heart to my friend he will not fill it with a jest." She quoted from a curious Eastern translation which had interested them.

"The world hears my voice," he quoted in return, "but my friend hears my heart-beat." One can come lightly to serious things. But I will be as serious as you please, Una. I have succeeded in my profession—and my profession is what I always wished. I have an ideal assistant—my most valued friend—and a staff with whom it is a pleasure to work. I have many friends, and few enemies—and those not virulent. I've more than that, if we're to be frank. I've lived a tolerably clean life for a man. There's no more on my conscience than it can bear. I've done a man's work, and haven't done it so badly. Have I missed so much?"

"Have you?" she asked.

"That comes later," he objected. "It is your turn. You said you would talk."

"No. I said you might talk to me."

"Very well. I will try to count your hits. You are twenty-nine, and look younger. You are, in fact, good-looking—which counts heavily with a woman."

"It counts more heavily to remember that she *was* good-looking."

"But you have not come to that stage yet; and you regular-featured beauties wear well."

"Really," she objected, "you are—not so serious as you promised. I am not a reigning beauty! However, I make no complaint about my looks. I am twenty-nine and I wear well. Go on."

"You are clever, and amiable, and popular. You have succeeded in your profession. You work in company congenial to you—I think?"

"I do—most certainly."

"You have many friends—and one."

"They are not comparable!"

"You have lived whitely. I'll stake my life on that. You are a good woman, Una."

"I hope so. A little on the hard side, some people say, but—my hardness is—rather superficial, you know."

"Of course, I know, comrade."

"I've a few feminine crookednesses. You don't always see through them." He looked round the shade, and she laughed softly. "Not *all*!"

"I don't tell you! Well, I don't mind them. I'm glad of this conversation for one thing. We have been able to say plainly that we appreciate one another. Or, if I haven't said it plainly, I say it now."

"And I."

They shook hands firmly.

"We haven't missed everything anyhow," he said, "but—I suppose a man ought to marry."

"Why haven't you?" she asked suddenly.

"I suppose because Miss Right never came along."

"Or you never noticed her; or wouldn't notice her. You made up your own idea of her, instead of letting her make it up for you."

"Miss Right wouldn't have asked my permission, I think," he stated.

"Did you ever think that any one —" He shook his head. "Weren't you ever tempted?"

"I was never tempted enough! You see I wanted to get on; and I never meant to marry unless—unless I *had* to. I rather put it out of my mind. I've known some nice women, of course, but— Really, none of them came up to you, Una. Upon my word, I think our friendship was better. Still——"

"Still," she repeated slowly.

"Sometimes when I see a man with his boys—or his girls——"

She gave a sharp cry.

"And I am a woman!" she wailed; and buried her face in her hands. The editor looked carefully the other way; and played with a paper-knife.

"After all, my dear friend," he said at length, "there are two sides to the question. You might have married the wrong man, or I the wrong woman. Most people do. Miss Right may have passed by; but I haven't noticed her."

"You haven't looked for her."

"Have you looked?"

She wiped her eyes under cover of the shade.

"It's no use my looking. I am a woman and have to be looked for. It isn't *my* fault."

"Isn't it? How many proposals have you had, Una?"

"None."

"Oh-h-h!" he said doubtfully. "I thought——"

"I never let it come to that," she said impatiently, "if you must know."

"I see. In other words, you waited for the ideal and refused the real. The sermon was evidently meant for you."

"It's no use marrying a man unless you want to! You can laugh. I know I'm inconsistent; but I *do* want the right man to come along and find me. I can't go looking for him. You see, I can only——"

"Pass by!"

"If I knew whom to 'pass'! You are a man. You can *look*."

He looked at her; and suddenly they both laughed.

"Don't let's begin with a dreadful mistake," she said. "You know very well we don't want each other."

"No-o," he agreed. "I suppose we don't—not in that way. It's rather a pity. If we'd begun on another basis—I wonder we didn't."

"Anyhow we didn't," she said briskly. "And if the story's going to put nonsense in people's heads, and make them look at the wrong people, we'd better not print it."

"I think we'll print it," he said. "And, as for *our* heads, the nonsense is in! I wouldn't take any one but the right one, and I don't expect to find her; but I shall 'look round' this Christmas. And you? Frankly, Una?"

She rose with a laugh.

"I'll go passing-by—in my new frocks. I've several; and a coat and skirt that's a *dream*! You'll see! Well, that's enough nonsense for to-night. Don't dare ever to mention it again, or I'll hate you. I've been over the last proof of the Christmas number, and Smithers is going to see it right through. Good-by."

"Good-by, my dear girl."

"Look round carefully," she said

gaily, from the door. "There's hope for you—and for me. The new coat and skirt! Good night!"

He listened to her step down the passage and shook his head.

"It's a pity that she and I didn't take things that way," he thought; "but when you've drifted past a point—I suppose she has some one in her head all the time. Women are like that. I wonder who he is? I shall notice when she wears that coat and skirt. She looks well in tailor-made things. For the matter of that she looks well in anything. By Jove! I shall miss her if she marries some fellow. Confound the wretched story!"

He turned to his work, but did not seem to get on with it. So he shut it up in his desk and left. He went early to office next morning to make up for lost time. He had scarcely seated himself at his desk when the sub-editor entered his room, in a new costume of light gray, fitting closely to her shapely figure. She had rather a color, and she laughed guiltily when he looked at her.

"Is that the 'passing-by' costume?" he asked.

"Yes," She walked across the hearth-rug, looking over her shoulder in the mantel-glass.

"It will never do," he told her.

"Not do!" She turned sharply round and stared at him. "Why?"

"You can't pass in it. You *shan't* pass, Una?"

She looked at him; and he looked at her. They both looked strangely younger in their excitement. Their hands found each other's before they spoke.

"It's you," he said brokenly. "It was always you, all the time! 'Oh, Lord! What fools we mortals be!' Why, I've loved you ever since you were a baby; and didn't know till last night that my dear love was passing by. Did you?"

"I suppose I knew," she said slowly; "but I didn't know that I knew—that, if you called, there was no passing by."



PLAYS AND PLAYERS

D A FIRST NIGHTER

"Jack Straw," first of the Maugham comedies to be produced in America, is witty and amusing; and capably acted by John Drew and Rose Coghlan. "A Gentleman from Mississippi" crowded with laughs, and very interesting as well. "The Fighting Hope" a blood thriller, with Blanche Bates at her best. "The American Idea" suggests a rush-hour at the Brooklyn Bridge. Lulu Glaser in "Mlle. Mischief" and Louise Gunning in "Marcelle" each score a decided success



SOMERSET MAUGHAM appears to be an English combination of letters that spells the synonymous equivalent of our own Clyde Fitch.

At one and the same time four of Mr. Maugham's plays held the London boards. Like our Mr. Fitch, too, he writes pleasant little social comedies. Of these only one has thus far reached the New York stage, though others are promised; and the one that brought him his first prominence, "Lady Frederick," is already being tried on the road by Miss Ethel Barrymore. It was left for Mr. John Drew, however, to introduce this playwright to New York.

When Mr. Drew first appeared in "Jack Straw" the polite audience which distinguishes each successive opening at the Empire Theater fairly held its breath, for John Drew wore a beard. Anything so subversive of precedent could not be recalled by the oldest first-nighter. However, the disguise was only temporary.

"Jack Straw" is as light as the game its name suggests. Like Mr. Charles Hawtrey, who played it originally in London, Mr. Drew brings to it the easy airiness of manner best calculated to bring out its good points.

In the history of the acted drama it is a device by no means unknown to take the plot of a serious play and make it serve as comedy. Mr. Maugham makes a sort of roundabout paraphrase of "The Lady of Lyons." The vulgar *Mrs. Parker Jennings*, who hails from odoriferous Brixton, is here shown in place of the exquisitely haughty *Pauline* of Bulwer Lytton's play, and it is her snobbish treatment of *Rosie Abbott* which eventually leads to her downfall at the hands of two friends of that badly treated little lady.

Jack Straw is first introduced as a waiter at the Grand Babylon Hotel. He masquerades at the suggestion of the conspiring friends as the long-lost *Grand Duke of Pomerania*. And as *Mrs. Parker Jennings* has a daughter, *Ethel*, for whom she covets an exalted husband, she is not in the least averse to cultivating this royal person. When

she insists that he immediately join a house-party at the family estates in Cheshire, *Jack Straw* readily assents. He has seen *Ethel* and he likes her; moreover, she has shown a disposition to stand up for him at the time when he was known to the family only in the guise of the humble hotel menial. Now, however, in his character of the *Grand Duke*, *Jack Straw* acquits himself so admirably that he is welcomed with open arms by the entire family. *Mrs. Parker Jennings*, in her pride, insists upon giving a huge lawn-party to which the entire countryside is invited.

Then comes the moment when the two conspirators, annoyed at *Jack Straw's* toplofty airs, determine that the joke has gone far enough. They make a full confession to *Mrs. Parker Jennings*, whose indignation, as may be imagined, passes all bounds. She orders *Jack Straw* from the house, but he refuses to budge. He has been having an extremely agreeable time, drinking good wines and smoking *Mr. Parker Jennings'* best cigars, and he makes it quite plain that he has no intention of abdicating the position that has been forced upon him. Moreover, when the hostess threatens to call in the police, he reminds her that in doing so she will make herself the laughing-stock of all her guests. So, for her own protection, she is obliged to assist him in continuing the deception.

What is the result?

Of course, the reader has already guessed that *Jack Straw* will contract an alliance with the beautiful daughter of the house. He has had the best of reasons for keeping up the disguise. *Count von Bremer*, the Pomeranian ambassador, appears on the scene, and then it develops that *Jack Straw* is in reality the very *Grand Duke* he has been impersonating.

It is a thin little piece, and as I have said, it is based on an idea that has done service too many times for computation, but the twist at the end is fairly fresh, and the whole is marked by a lively play of sparkling wit.

It is acted capitally, too, in the important parts. Mr. Drew has not ap-

peared to better advantage for several seasons. He is quite wonderfully juvenile in appearance after he has discarded the disguising Vandyke beard, and he plays with gaiety and attractive, youthful animation. Miss Rose Coghlan, who has been enduring banishment to darkest vaudeville, comes back to the Broadway lime-light, and her volatility and splendid variety of method are invaluable aids to the general success. There is little in the play for Mr. Drew's new leading woman, Miss Mary Boland, but she is very beautiful and her manner is gracious and winning.

There was a time, and that, too, not so very many years ago, when the American dramatist in his effort to find a theme looked everywhere for it except on his own door-step; but the success of a number of plays based on purely native proposition set our young authors to thinking. Mr. Harrison Rhodes, the co-author of "*A Gentleman from Mississippi*," is said to be an Englishman, a fact worth mentioning since it seems a little odd that even one alien finger should appear in a pie of so essentially American a flavor. Thomas A. Wise is co-author with Mr. Rhodes, and a doubly important share of the success of this exceptionally genial entertainment is due to him. For Mr. Wise not only helped to write the play, but he is a very large adjunct in the production, appearing as the *Gentleman from Mississippi* himself, and getting the lines over the footlights with such unction that they have the quality of spontaneous wit. He is assisted very ably by young Douglas Fairbanks, who begins by playing the Washington correspondent of a New York newspaper so like the real article that he is entitled to honorary membership in the Press Club.

Senator Langdon in this play is the type of man who believes that honesty is the best politics.

The senator confesses that he has been elected by the machine, but he does not intend to be run by "men of large experience," as he wants to get a little experience of his own. He is not

averse to having some assistance, however, for the practical game of politics, as it is conducted in Washington, is new to him. This is where the reporter can be of service. The senator is as "honest as the day is long," but he is reminded that "the days have a way of growing shorter when Congress is in session."

Before he has been in the harness many hours, events occur to prove it. The reporter having had one look at the senator's daughter agrees to act as the old gentleman's private secretary.

A bill to make Altacoola a naval base is the pivot about which the lively action of the play is made to spin. The senator honestly believes that this is the proper site, but presently he discovers, through the activity of his secretary, that two other senators, who are not in Washington for glory or health, are interesting themselves in the project in order to realize a large profit on lands they own in Altacoola. When *Senator Langdon* indignantly confronts them with this fact they turn the tables by disclosing to him that his son—a worthless young cub—and his elder daughter have made heavy purchases of the same land. This places the father in the position of using them as catspaws to pull his own chestnuts from the fire. For a minute *Senator Langdon* is nonplused, and there is some tall talking all around.

"But," says the old gentleman finally, "you forget that the game of bluff was invented in Mississippi."

He ends up by a threat to make things very warm for his opponents the following day at twelve-thirty.

"How are you going to do it?" asks the private secretary, when the others have withdrawn.

"Damfino!" laconically replies the senator.

The final curtain does not fall, however, until he has made good his promise.

It has been a long time since a piece has been presented in New York in which the laughs so crowded one another, but the play has a sentimental charm, also, in the relationship between

the old senator and his youthful protégé and mentor, which glows with genuine sympathy.

Mr. Wise fairly revels in the gentle, human character; and Mr. Fairbanks has the happy faculty of presenting a type of wide-awake up-to-dateness that has all the charm of youth without offensive "freshness."

If we are deeply sensitive to the change of heart that is coming over our dramatists in the exposition of an honest politician in a play, what are we to say in the presence of an honest financier? Does it foreshadow an era of villainless melodrama, or is it merely an exception to prove a rule? The money king has so long been the means by which honesty has been ground to earth only to rise triumphant in the last act that the sight of impeccable gold-lined virtue writing in the toils of unmerited public suspicion is almost beyond belief. Yet Mr. W. J. Hurlburt, sponsored by the maker of successful playwrights, Mr. David Belasco, presents this unusual type in "The Fighting Hope," this season's opening play at the Stuyvesant Theater, where at the present writing it gives promise of providing its young author—Mr. Hurlburt is in his twenties—with the delightful sensation of large and profitable royalties. Certainly a more enthusiastic first-night reception has seldom been seen, and the play gives every evidence of being a success.

Anna Granger's husband, *Robert*, has been sent to the penitentiary for overcertification of a large check, and his innocence has been protested to such good effect that there is already a sign of veering of public sentiment in his favor, the general opinion now being that *Granger* has been made a scapegoat for his employer, *Burton Temple*, the president of the Gotham Trust Company. *Anna*, in the hope of finding some proof of her husband's innocence, engages as stenographer and confidential secretary for the financier. She is fortunate in having the friendship of the girl who has been acting in that capacity for *Mr. Temple*, and who recommends her for the place.

Moreover *Mr. Temple's* housekeeper turns out to be an old acquaintance.

In the subsequent proceedings the further fact is developed that *Temple* himself has been a sort of ideal to *Anna*, ever since the day—many years before—when she met him in the elevator of an office-building where she was employed. The *Grangers* have two children, and it is in the desire to save them from the ultimate shame of their father's felonious record, as well as to effect his release, that *Anna* sets out upon her mission.

Without going into an analysis of the play in general, for the moment, it may be mentioned that this note of mother-love is one of its strongest factors and does much to create the deep sympathetic interest of the story. Upon her arrival at the *Temple* home, where the entire action is concentrated, *Anna* discovers that the financier, with the assistance of his confidential agent, *Marshfield Craven*, is as strenuously engaged in ferreting out evidence to prove his innocence as she is to prove his guilt. For a time neither of them appears to make much headway. Then news comes that the grand jury has finally indicted *Burton Temple*, and it appears that shortly he will be called to trial. Now *Craven* arrives with a letter, which detectives have discovered, proving conclusively that *Anna's* husband is the guilty man and completely exonerating the financier.

An exceedingly well-acted scene of jubilation between the two men (*Mr. Charles Richman* and *Mr. John Cope*) is now followed by one in which *Anna* (*Miss Blanche Bates*) extracts the important letter from the safe. She is overcome with horror at the revelation of her husband's guilt, and, in an excess of hysterical excitement, burns the letter, knowing that without it there will be no evidence upon which her husband can be held. Almost on the instant she realizes that by this same act she has condemned the innocent financier to prison, the fact having been previously driven home that conviction is practically assured and that the penalty is ten years. By this time, too, it

has become evident that the financier is deeply in love with her, and against her will she returns the affection.

This exposition occupying the greater part of two acts hardly prepares one for the series of surprises that have been skilfully contrived to bring the final act to a blood-tingling conclusion. *Anna* confesses to *Temple* that she has destroyed the paper, and he forgives her. Then her husband arrives and announces that he has been pardoned. When he starts to justify himself and to talk of the wrongs he has suffered as an innocent man condemned to save another, *Anna* silences him with the statement that she knows his guilt.

In the meantime the confidential agent, who has not been made acquainted with exactly how matters stand, returns with the one link of missing evidence. All along an effort has been made to ascertain what became of the money which *Granger* stole, and it now appears that he has spent the greater share of it in keeping up an establishment for a woman in New York. *Craven* dictates a letter to *Anna* conveying this fact, and it is then that she becomes aware of her husband's infidelity.

When she informs him a little while later that she means to go on the stand and testify regarding the destroyed letter in order to clear the financier, the husband loses all sense of decency and openly announces that he will connect her name with a scandal in order to show a motive behind the act. Then *Anna* turns on him with the ferocity of a tigress. But it is evident that the husband holds the key to the situation. How can it end? This is where you sit tight and wonder how it will all come out.

There is a moment of silence, followed by a sharp, shrill blast from a whistle; then, suddenly, *Granger* opens his overcoat, showing his prison garb, and, sinking to his knees, clamorously confesses that he has not been pardoned but has escaped from the prison. The guards are on his trail. He begs for mercy, implores *Anna* to save him. For a moment she hesitates, then she turns

out the lights and shows him a way through a rear door. As she cringes panic-stricken against the wall a shot rings out. *Craven* enters, a moment later, announcing that *Granger* is dead. Of course you are allowed to infer that *Anna* will find a new father for her two children in the financier.

"The Fighting Hope" provides Miss Blanche Bates with opportunities for highly colored acting of which she avails herself to the fullest extent. She has some magnificent moments, and plays throughout with strength and perfect sincerity. She is ably supported by Mr. John Cope, Mr. Charles Richmond, and Mr. Howell Hansel.

Musical comedy, like the poor, we have always with us. On the program of "The American Idea," which might better be described as Mr. George M. Cohan's notion, I find this line of credit, "Drum Effects by J. E. Lynchan," which, for once, is giving credit where credit is due. For the distinguishing feature of the entertainment is its noise, to which the drummer, of course, contributes largely.

Some one asked Robert Dailey, a member of the company, how he liked the show. "Immense!" he answered. "I ran twelve miles in three acts and only lost by a nose."

As a matter of fact, everybody runs in "The American Idea," which is as near like a dramatization of the rush-hour at the Brooklyn Bridge as anything I can think of. The chorus whirls in and out of its dressing-rooms and clothes, and on and off the stage, at a pace that is maddening. There is no indication from the front that the principals have much time to read Browning and Matthew Arnold between their exits and their entrances, a condition of affairs which must be highly trying to their patience. The best feature of the show is "American Ragtime," a dancing number during which the stage is crowded with chorus boys and girls decked out in "Stars and Stripes." Trixie Friganza is the chief among the female contingent, and she is amusing, while Stella Hammerstein, the strikingly good-looking daughter of "Our Os-

car," is on hand to contrast pretty, precise speech with common or garden Americanese.

The success of "The Merry Widow" has not been without its effect in inducing managers to consider a type of musical show of a somewhat different order from this noisy kind. Lulu Glaser, at the Lyric, and Louise Gunning, at the Casino, appear in pieces of less nerve-wracking character, but the success of both entertainments appears to indicate that even musical-comedy audiences do not mind a little placidity now and then.

Both "Mlle. Mischief," Miss Glaser's piece, and "Marcelle," in which Miss Gunning became a "star," have tuneful scores, and there is at least a vestige of sanity to the action. The former, originally offered several years ago as "The Girl in the Barracks," has been done over excellently from the original Viennese by Sydney Rosenfeld and E. M. Ziehrer, but its success is chiefly due to the unlimited vivacity of Miss Glaser, who frolics through it like a schoolgirl on a holiday.

She has made a wager that she will be able to spend a day in the barracks, and to effect this she dons man's attire and is accepted as a raw recruit. The idea is by no means novel, but the complications, involving an attempt to enforce a regulation regarding baths, are very laughable.

Gertrude Darrell, a young woman with a pleasing personality, and an exceptionally well-trained voice, emerges in this piece from obscurity to a promised stardom.

Hairdresser witticisms were the order of the day after the first production of "Marcelle," for which Mr. Pixley has written a conventional book, with good, lilting, popular tunes by Mr. Lunders. The acting demands on Miss Gunning are not arduous, but she has plenty of opportunity to use her fresh and pleasing voice. Like Miss Glaser, she must don male attire before the plot can properly develop. And in both these entertainments pleasure may be derived from the blending of beautiful colors and well-designed costumes.

FOR BOOK LOVERS **Archibald Lowery Sessions**

Why Ainslee's is "the magazine that entertains." Announcements for January. In "The Diva's Ruby" F. Marion Crawford's story-telling faculty is unimpaired. Mrs. Wilson Woodrow's "The Silver Butterfly" an admirable piece of work. The complications and characters of "Heartbreak Hill," by Herman Knickerbocker Viele, are interesting. In "Peter" F. Hopkinson Smith drops from sentiment to sentimentality. Marie Corelli indulges in tedious disquisitions and exhibits violent prejudices in "Holy Orders." "The Little Brown Jug at Kildare," by Meredith Nicholson, is a tangle of episode and scarcely mildly interesting. E. F. Benson's "The Blotting Book" a very well told mystery-story. Too much description for the purposes of fiction in "Coffee and a Love-Affair," by Mary B. Sheldon



AINSLEE'S MAGAZINE will begin another year with an added prestige as "the magazine that entertains." The comforting assurances of this, which we receive almost constantly from our readers, we attribute to the quality of freshness, of originality that has pervaded the pages of the magazine for the past twelve-month. To escape the monotony that pervades what may be called conventional magazine fiction, to part company with the familiar types of character which in the same environment always do the same things, inevitably evolving the same plots and episodes, and at the same time to avoid eccentricity and improbability and to adhere to what is plausible and reasonable, is an ever-present problem. It means keeping abreast of the times, meeting each new demand as it presents itself, supplying entertainment for readers instead of ennui.

If the testimonials that have come from the readers of AINSLEE's have any significance it is that the magazine has been doing these things. The current November number is as fitting a proof

of it as could be supplied, for we do not think that its readers will find a commonplace or hackneyed tale in it anywhere, and they will all be found to be true to some of the infinite phases of human nature. If any one can read, without making this concession, such stories as "The Art Agent," "Mimi of the Miracles," "To the Rescue," or "The Unforeseen," we shall be surprised to know of it; if he can read "The Letter" without sharing Rosa Brinsmade's heart-tragedy suspense it must be that he has good control of himself. Joseph C. Lincoln's story, "The Back Bedroom," is sure to be popular, as well as Mary Heaton Vorse's "Other Men's Wives." It is as entertaining and diverting a table of contents as could be demanded.

The January number will be better yet, in our opinion. The complete novel is by Will Levington Comfort, and is tense, dramatic, human, and full of color. It is a story of metropolitan life, but is neither of the traditional society type or its opposite.

Mary Raymond Shipman Andrews will be represented with a short story in her best vein, and those who have been so fortunate as to read "The Perfect Tribute" do not need to be told

what that is. Herman Whitaker, whose story, "The Governor's Daughter," in the October number, created much talk, will have another in January. Quentin M. Drake, George Lee Burton, Demetra Kenneth Brown, Arthur Stanwood Pier, Edmund Vance Cooke, Johnson Morton, and Lola Ridge will also have stories of the highest class.

The interest in AINSLEE's bridge, articles continues to grow and they will be carried on as long as the magazine readers want them.



"The Diva's Ruby" is the last of Mr. F. Marion Crawford's three books concerning the affairs of Margaret Doune, the other two being "Fair Margaret" and "Primadonna." All have been published by the Macmillan Company.

Readers of "Primadonna" will remember that the story ended with the engagement of the young singer to Konstantin Logotheti, the Greek financier, and they may wonder with that in mind what then remained to be told that could be of continued interest to the novel reader. As if conscious of this contingency Mr. Crawford has opened the last book of the "trilogy" in a locality and with an episode as far removed, seemingly, from the action of the preceding stories as possible.

Somewhere in Central Asia is a ruby mine, the secret of which has been the possession of the male members of a Tartar family for centuries, discovered, however, by a daughter of the present generation. Baraka, as she is called, falls in love with a Caucasian guest of her father, and reveals the secret to him on the understanding that, having loaded himself with precious stones, he shall take her away with him. But he takes the gems and deserts her.

With this as a prologue the story of Margaret is resumed, and Mr. Van Torp promptly puts in an appearance and announces to his friend, Lady Maud Leven, that, having sold the Nickel Trust, he has come to Europe to marry Margaret, Logotheti or no Logotheti. The problem therefore, not only for

Van Torp but also for the author, is to get rid of the fiancé, and they do it, of course, very neatly and ingeniously as well as somewhat sensationally. The hustling representative of American high finance shows no lack of his accustomed resourcefulness, but his methods are softened by a dash of scrupulousness which makes him rather more engaging.

Mr. Crawford has displayed in this story and in "Primadonna" a new manner, an unexpected tendency toward sensationalism, which, while it may grieve some fastidious souls, has yet left his story-telling faculty unimpaired.



The Bobbs-Merrill Company have published in book form Mrs. Wilson Woodrow's story, "The Veiled Mariposa," which appeared as a complete novel in the September number of this magazine, under the new title of "The Silver Butterfly."

The fact that the story was the leading feature of that number of AINSLEE's is perhaps a sufficient indication of our high opinion of it, carrying, as it of course did, our recommendation to our readers. It should, however, be said that since its serial publication the story has been so skilfully amplified as to intensify the interest by prolonging the suspense and broadening the characterization. This is especially true of the new chapter giving a telephone conversation between Hayden and the mysterious Spanish lady, a chapter which has a charm and atmosphere which color the whole story.

It will easily repay another reading in its new form.



"Heartbreak Hill" is hardly an appropriate title for Herman Knickerbocker Viele's new book recently published by Duffield & Co. The author calls it a "comedy romance," and it is descriptive enough for all practical purposes, though we should say that the element of comedy, if not entirely lacking, is yet so subordinated to that of

modern romance that it might be wholly disregarded. It is suggested, possibly, by the rather light and wholly cheerful style in which the story is told, a style which very well fits the characters and the plot.

Heartbreak Hill, a "rugged, shaggy little mountain," a "chaotic pyramid of worthless rock and unproductive soil" is, so to speak, the key of the story, principally because it is owned by the hero and heroine, Sidney Beatoun and Miss Mopsie Beatoun, as tenants in common. The two are cousins, sufficiently remote, however, for the purposes of romance; and their joint inheritance has, from their earliest years, had a sentimental interest for them. But one of the chief functions of romance is to transmute sentimental into practical interests, a fact of which Mr. Viele shows thorough appreciation, for he tells of the discovery that the hill is actually one great lump of solid copper, and how it aided in the further discovery by the cousins of a mutual affection, almost as long-standing and deep-seated and apparently unsuspected as the copper-mine.

Of course there are many uncertainties and misunderstandings before this happy consummation is reached, many complications in which other characters play parts of varying importance—otherwise there would be somewhat less than 330 pages in the book—but on the whole the complications and characters are interesting, the story moves at a good pace, and the "realism" is kept within the proper bounds of a romance.



None of Mr. F. Hopkinson Smith's books can be criticized for lack of sentiment. It is a quality that has more or less colored everything that he has written, but it has never before, so far as we can remember, got so far beyond his control as to drop to sentimentality. That it has done so in his new book, "Peter," published by Charles Scribner's Sons, seems to us beyond question.

The characters in this book, almost without exception, are too good to be true. Peter and Jack and Ruth Macfarlane and her father and Isaac Cohen and Holker Morris are the flawless type of humans pervaded by that kind of affection, each for the other, which, at the most inconsiderable trifle, overflows and submerges everything in its saccharine tide; one cannot even hold to his faith in the guilt of the Breens and the Masons and the Portmans, who are the author's representatives of predatory wealth in the story. The reader's moral sense may approve, in the abstract, of the goodness of the good people, but his sense of proportion will be shocked and outraged at their manifestations of it; in the abstract he will condemn the wickedness of the wicked, but he will not believe in it. It is all very well for the optimist to regulate his own life upon the principle of universal salvation, but to write good fiction he must, for the time being, believe in predestination, election, and eternal damnation—though he needn't actually say so; to meet artistic requirements even this needs some restraint.

Perhaps it is hardly necessary to say that Jack Breen, the hero, and Ruth Macfarlane, the heroine, are well-bred Virginians, and that Peter, the beneficent paying-teller, who, as Mr. Smith says on the title-page, is not the hero, is from Central New York. Jack is trying to reconcile his Virginia notions of "honorable gentlemen" with his experiences in Wall Street and has several jolts in consequence, but he comes through unscathed, chaperoned by Peter, who has kept himself unspoiled and unspotted in spite of his long years of service in that moral cesspool.



There are some writers of fiction who seem to find it difficult to realize that the interest of the reading public in them is secondary, or at any rate distinct from or dependent upon its interest in their stories. No one enjoys a novel in which the author insists upon keeping the center of the stage, forgetting

that authors, like saints and demigods, when pressed upon the attention, "fatigue and invade."

In reading "Holy Orders," which is published by F. A. Stokes & Co., one cannot possibly miss the fact that Miss Marie Corelli, who wrote it, is a violent opponent of organized Christianity and a horrified observer of the consequences of the drink-habit. She has characters, and a plot with incidents and episodes which might, under proper inspiration, illustrate and emphasize the evil effects of these things, but she is constantly usurping the functions of her creatures by long disquisitions which are rendered futile by her own undisguised prejudices.

The principal figure in the book is an English clergyman named Everton, a man who is made to suggest some degree of spiritual enlightenment, and his views on the topics referred to would be, under the circumstances, of infinitely greater importance to the reader than Miss Corelli's. But he is never permitted to communicate to the audience either himself or his views without interruption. The poor man has had trouble enough in his life and is willing enough to tell you all about it, but every attempt to do so is promptly smothered and he humbly subsides.

Among the other characters is the now familiar Roman priest of fiction, strong in his faith in his church, yet gentle, loving, human, broad-minded. Father Donay belongs to a type that is always attractive, but he himself gives one the feeling that he is a piece of stage property borrowed for the occasion.

The story, merely as a story, is neither remarkable nor very original, but admirers of Miss Corelli will perhaps find it interesting.



"The Little Brown Jug at Kildare" is Meredith Nicholson's latest story, published, like the rest, by the Bobbs-Merrill Company.

The theme of the story is what the Governor of North Carolina said to

the Governor of South Carolina, the plot is not strikingly unlike that of "The Port of Missing Men," or even that of "The House of a Thousand Candles," a circumstance which leads us to infer that the publishers have succeeded in persuading Mr. Nicholson that it is always wise to push a good thing along.

Considering the fact that Mr. Thomas Ardmore is a young New Yorker with plenty of money it is, perhaps, not so strange that he should chase off after a young woman who winks at him from a car-window, for he really has nothing else to do. It is a little less likely, however, that his friend Griswold, a professor of maritime law in a university in Virginia—no novel is complete without a Virginian these days—should be diverted by another girl so far as to assume gubernatorial functions. And it becomes more nearly preposterous when these two couples, Ardmore and Jerry Dangerfield and Griswold and Barbara Osborne, become practically the executives of the two adjacent States and find a *casus belli* over the question of the punishment of "Mr. Bill Appleweight, alias Potet," an incorrigible moonshiner, whose occupation accounts for the presence of "the little brown jug at Kildare."

The story is a tangle of episode rather than a plot, and it is hardly exciting or ingenious enough to make it more than mildly interesting. We should say that Mr. Nicholson had exhausted himself in this direction, and that he could wisely surrender the field to some one else and perhaps seek another for himself.



Another of the complete novels that have appeared in AINSLEE'S MAGAZINE has been published in book form. This time it is "The Blotting Book," by E. F. Benson, and is brought out by Doubleday, Page & Co.

Many readers of this magazine will doubtless remember it, but to those who, by any chance, failed to read it we venture to recommend it as a well

told and very interesting mystery-story.

It is rather unusual in its most essential features, the interest is skilfully worked up and sustained, and the solution is deferred in a manner to keep the reader in a state of uncertainty almost to the end. The criminal's devices to conceal his crime turn out to be the very clues which lead to its detection.



Central America is the scene of a story called "Coffee and a Love-Affair," by Mary B. Sheldon, published by the Frederick A. Stokes Company.

It is told in the first person by a young woman who has previously shown a decided tendency for adventure and a desire to escape a persistent lover. It is very creditably told, though for the purposes of fiction there is more description than seems just the thing for an expectant reader. An impression is consequently made that the book was written as much to give the author's knowledge of coffee-planting as to tell a story. The "love-affair" is the least important part of the book.



"Villa Rubein" is the title of a novel by John Galsworthy, published by G. P. Putnam's Sons.

It is a rather commonplace love-story with very little either to criticize or commend.

The scene is laid in and around Botzen in the Austrian Tyrol, and has to do chiefly with an English family domiciled in the Villa Rubein and an Austrian artist Alois Harz, of peasant birth, who had, years before, been mixed up in some revolutionary plot in Vienna. Having escaped the authorities he had gone to London where he had pursued his art studies, and later had returned to Austria supposing his

early performances had been forgotten. His love-affair with Christian Devorell, the young daughter of the household at the Villa Rubein, arouses such violent opposition in her family that, having got hold of the facts of his career, they betray him to the Austrian officials. As usual, however, all these difficulties are straightened out.

There is small opportunity for anything striking in this plot beyond the delineation of the characters, and the author's work in this respect is rather mediocre except in the one instance of Nicholas Treffry, Christian's uncle, who has possibilities. But even he does not make quite the impression that he should. Harz and Christian have little to commend them to the discerning reader; their love-making is artificial, and their characters on the whole are decidedly weak and trivial.



Important New Books.

"The Altar Stairs," G. B. Lancaster, Doubleday, Page & Co.

"Cy Whitaker's Place," Joseph C. Lincoln, D. Appleton & Co.

"Helianthus," Ouida, Macmillan Co.

"The Distributors," Anthony Partridge, McClure Co.

"Amabel Channice," Anne Douglas Sedgwick, Century Co.

"Desire," Una L. Silberrad, Doubleday, Page & Co.

"The Red City," S. Weir Mitchell, Century Co.

"The Wind in the Willows," Kenneth Grahame, Charles Scribner's Sons.

"Lewis Rand," Mary Johnston, Houghton, Mifflin & Co.

"The Gentleman," Alfred Ollivant, Macmillan Co.

"Judith of the Cumberlands," Alice MacGowan, G. P. Putnam's Sons.

"Interplay," Beatrice Harraden, F. A. Stokes Co.

"Gilbert Neal," Will N. Harben, Harper & Bros.

"An Idyl of All Fool's Day," Josephine Daskam Bacon, Dodd, Mead & Co.

"The Wheel o' Fortune," Louis Tracy, Edward J. Clode.



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The lists of names **should be written very plainly** on separate paper from any letter you may wish to enclose. Give the total number of names, and **be sure to sign your own full name, with street address, city and state.** Do not neglect this, for we will have no other way of finding you. The prizes will be mailed to winners as soon as possible after contest closes. If there is anything not fully understood, write us at once for further explanation.

The person sending the greatest number of correct names will receive	First Prize.
" " " " next " " " " " " " "	Second " "
" " " " " " " " " " " " " "	Third " "
" " " " " " " " " " " " " "	Fourth " "
" " " " " " " " " " " " " "	Fifth " "

The 1,000 persons whose replies are next lower than the Fifth Grade will receive \$1.00 each
this latter Grade " each a 50c. Bottle of Hinds' Cream. I

If two or more persons should send the greatest number of correct names, the first prize will be divided equally among them; and if two or more persons should send in the next greatest number of correct names, the second prize will be divided equally among them. The same plan will be followed in awarding the third, fourth and fifth prizes.



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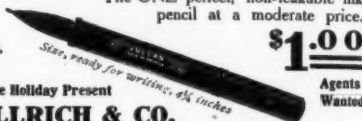
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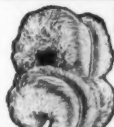
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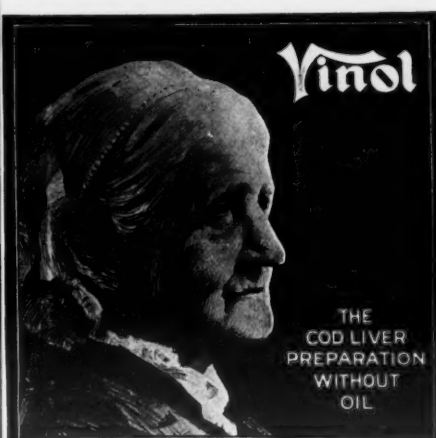
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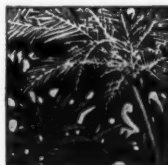
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Within Three Days one is in the American Tropics for a Three Weeks' Cruise of Three Thousand Miles on Summer Seas. The steamer is the traveler's home for the entire voyage, and the discomforts of land journeying are avoided. Every convenience and comfort provided on board, and every facility afforded for sight-seeing trips on shore. All steamers have "wireless" equipment. Special tourist rate of \$140 includes all expenses on board for the entire trip.

THE NEW YORK & PORTO RICO STEAMSHIP CO.

12 Broadway, New York
 or Raymond & Whitcomb Company, all principal cities


Write for illustrated booklet, containing description of Porto Rico, attractive pictures of the island, and details of the Special Cruises.



Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you, I want what I asked for. Good-bye."

COLGATE'S

RIBBON DENTAL CREAM



**COMES OUT
A RIBBON**

LIES FLAT ON THE BRUSH

Delicious, antiseptic, more convenient, more efficient and less wasteful than powder

We recently sampled all dentists, 32 in number, in three representative residential towns near New York City. 23 signed a statement declaring Colgate's Dental Cream "the most satisfactory dentifrice." 7 signed that it was "very" or "most satisfactory." This, in spite of professional reluctance to endorse proprietary articles, and the fact that 4 who signed owned stock in companies manufacturing competing dental preparations. This is but typical of the way in which the Dental Profession regards this Cream. It is what they and the Public have long wanted—**A Perfect Dentifrice in a Perfect Package.**

Sample sent for 2cts in stamps

COLGATE & CO., Dept. A, 55 JOHN STREET, NEW YORK.

ARNICA TOOTH SOAP



Strong's Arnica Tooth Soap
Antiseptic, preserves while it beautifies—sweetens the breath—hardens the gums—whitens the teeth—a leading dentifrice for a

Third of a Century

The metal package is the most convenient for travel or the home—no liquid or powder to spill or waste.

Preserves while it Beautifies

ARNICA TOOTH SOAP

25c At All Druggists
(Sent post-paid if yours hasn't it.)

STRONG'S ARNICA JELLY
Ideal for sunburn, keeps the skin soft and smooth; nothing better for chaps, pimples, burns, bruises and all eruptions. The collapsible metal tube is convenient and unbreakable. If your dealer hasn't it, send to us. Sent post-paid for **25 Cents.**

Guaranteed under the Food and Drugs Act, June 30, 1906; Serial No. 1612.

C. H. STRONG & CO., CHICAGO, U.S.A.

MENNEN'S BORATED TALCUM TOILET POWDER



"Baby's Best Friend"

and Mamma's greatest comfort. Mennen's relieves and prevents Chapped Hands and Chafing.

For your protection the genuine is put up in non-refillable boxes—the "Box that Lox," with Mennen's face on top. Sold everywhere or by mail 25 cents. Sample free.

Try Mennen's Violet (Borated) Talcum Toilet Powder—it has the scent of Fresh-cut Parma Violets. Sample Free.

GERHARD MENNEN CO., Newark, N. J.
Mennen's Sen Yang Toilet Powder, Oriental Odor | No Mennen's Borated Skin Soap (blue wrapper) | Samples Specially prepared for the nursery. Sold only at Stores

Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you, I want what I asked for. Good-bye."

Great Western

EXTRA DRY
CHAMPAGNE

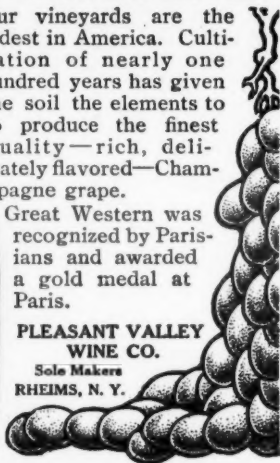


Our vineyards are the oldest in America. Cultivation of nearly one hundred years has given the soil the elements to produce the finest quality—rich, delicately flavored—Champagne grape.

Great Western was recognized by Parisians and awarded a gold medal at Paris.

PLEASANT VALLEY
WINE CO.

Sole Makers
RHEIMS, N. Y.



Evans' Ale

opens the way to real

Christmas Cheer

and true

Fireside Comfort

A barrel containing 10 doz. bottles makes one of the most thoughtful and enjoyable holiday gifts. It does the greatest good for the greatest number by promoting

Good Health, Good Spirits, Good Nature

In "Splits" as well as regular size bottles.

Order from nearest Dealer, or write direct to

C. H. EVANS & SONS

Brewery and Bottling Works, HUDSON, N. Y.

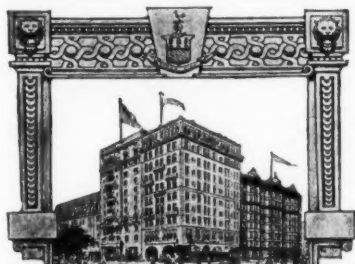
Good as Ever



COATES

ORIGINAL
PLYMOUTH

DRY GIN



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Magnificent New

Hoffman House

MADISON SQUARE, NEW YORK

Absolutely Fireproof

The finest type of modern hotel architecture in New York. Beautifully furnished. Comfort and luxurious ease.

Located in the very heart of New York, where all the life and fashion of the metropolis centre.

Room.....\$1.50 and \$2.00

Room and Bath.....\$2.50 and upward

Parlor, Bedroom and Bath.....\$5.00

Service and cuisine far famed for their excellence. Delightful music afternoon and evening.

Send for particulars and handsome booklet.

J. P. CADDAGAN
Managing Director

Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you, I want what I asked for. Good-bye."

50¢ Bull Dog SUSPENDERS

IN HANDSOME SINGLE PAIR BOXES
MAKE DESIRABLE GIFTS

Because of more rubber, better web and stronger parts, we positively guarantee that

BULL DOG SUSPENDERS
Outwear Three Ordinary Kinds

Stretch a pair—superior elasticity—more wear and comfort—is instantly noticed

In handsome, single-pair boxes
THEY MAKE

IDEAL, INEXPENSIVE
Gifts for Man or Boy

Made light weight for gentlemen and heavyweight for strenuous use Extra long in either weight, if desired

50 Cents at Your Dealer

or, by mail, postpaid, if he cannot supply you

Money back if not satisfactory

HEWES & POTTER

Dept. 639 87 Lincoln Street
BOSTON, MASS.



SOUPS STEWES and HASHES

are rendered much more tasty and
appetizing by using

LEA & PERRINS SAUCE

THE ORIGINAL WORCESTERSHIRE

It is a rare relish for Fish, Meats,
Game, Salads, Cheese, etc.

Beware of Imitations.

JOHN DUNCAN'S SONS, Agents, New York

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If you really realized the uniqueness of a book form card with smooth edges—perfectly smooth—you would send for a sample of our

Peerless Patent Book Form Cards.

give us your order and never again use any other card. You will look in vain for any indication of the card having been detached. Our patent method makes the detached edge just as smooth as the other edges.

Send for a Sample Tab
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**OUR SMART
CARD IN CASE**



STEEL COMPANY

PITTSBURGH, PA.

E. K. HARRIS
SALES AGENT

FISHER BUILDING
CHICAGO

The JOHN B. WIGGINS CO.

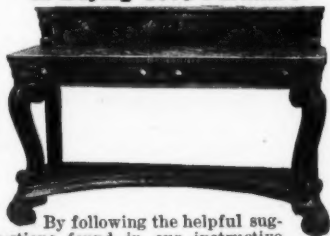
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MISTAKES AVOIDED

In Buying Good Furniture



By following the helpful suggestions found in our instructive booklet, "Furniture of Character." No advertisement can adequately tell the wonderful story of the remarkable

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reproductions of Period and Colonial furniture for the bed room, dining room and library. This furniture charms by its solidity, grace and beauty because it is artistically designed, durably constructed and elegantly finished. The booklet will be sent for 16 cents in U. S. stamps to partly cover its cost. If not satisfactory, return it and stamps will be refunded.

Our integrity of fifty years standing and our guarantee shopmark is your safeguard in buying this furniture from the dealers.

BERKEY & GAY FURNITURE COMPANY Estab. 1850.
Please address Dept. Z. Grand Rapids, Mich.



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White Rock

"The World's Best Table Water"

Congress Cards.



Gold edges. 50c. per pack. 90 picture backs, dainty colors and gold.

Bicycle Cards.



40 regulation backs. Most durable 25c. card made. More sold than all others combined.

200-page book, "Card Games and How to Play Them," new edition revised; latest rules for all popular games. Sent prepaid for 6 flap encls from Bicycle tuck boxes, or 15c. in stamps. The U. S. Playing Card Co., Dept. 17 Cincinnati, U. S. A.

Ask a Wing customer what he thinks of Wing Pianos and Wing methods. We will send you names in your locality for the asking.

WING PIANOS

are made by us, in our own factory. They are sold direct from our factory and in no other way. Dealers' and agents' profits and every unnecessary cost eliminated. Every dollar spent with us is piano value through and through, the best that 40 years of study and experience can produce.

AN ABSOLUTELY FREE TRIAL for 20 days, in your own home, no cost or obligation. **ALL FREIGHTS PAID** and all risks assumed by us.

The pioneers of the direct plan of piano selling, our unparalleled success has brought forth many imitators, but no competitors, either as to the excellence of our product or the integrity and economy of our methods. Forty years of daily increasing business and 45,000 satisfied buyers testify to this.

You save from \$100 to \$300—get a strictly high-grade piano—and are protected by an unquestioned, binding guarantee. Easy payments and old instruments liberally exchanged.

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A copyrighted book of 152 pages with many illustrations. A complete reference book on the piano subject. History of the piano, descriptions of every part, how to judge good and bad materials, workmanship, etc. Teaches you how to buy intelligently. Free for the asking from the old house of

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LOFTIS SYSTEM

CHRISTMAS ON CREDIT PRESENTS

You Can Easily Own a Diamond or Watch or present one as a gift to some loved one. Send for our beautiful descriptive catalogue and Jewelry. Then, in the privacy of your home or office, select whatever you desire. We make \$5 or \$10 do the work that \$50 does in a cash store and give you a written guarantee of value and quality. Do your Christmas shopping now conveniently and leisurely. Don't wait until the Christmas rush is on. Now is the time to make choice selections. If considering a Diamond or Watch as a gift, you will find the Loftis System a great and timely convenience on anniversaries, birthdays, weddings, holidays, etc. Diamonds as an investment are better than a savings bank because they pay four times the rate of interest. They are increasing in value from 15 to 20 per cent each year. They are better than real estate because you can realize their full value at any time at the highest market price. Our Christmas catalogue is free. Write for it today. Do it now.

LOFTIS
JEWELS & CO. Dept. P-29 92 to 98 State Street, Chicago, Illinois.

Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you, I want what I asked for. Good-bye."

Your Medicine Chest is Not Complete

unless it contains a complete assortment of

VASELINE

In the convenient, sanitary pure tin tubes.



There is no household remedy so often in demand. There is none other that brings such quick and sure relief.

First be sure and get the kind of Vaseline suited to your particular need.

There's the kind that stops a toothache, and is better than a mustard plaster for rheumatism, etc. That kind is **Capsicum Vaseline**.

There's also the kind that heals a cut or a sore; the best of all antiseptic dressings. That kind is **Carbolated Vaseline**.

The other { **White Vaseline,**
Camphorated Vaseline,
Borated Vaseline,
Mentholated Vaseline,
Vaseline Cold Cream,
Vaseline Camphor Ice,
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Perfumed White Vaseline.

If you don't know the different uses of these Vaselines, it is more than worth your while to sit down and write for our useful "Vaseline Handbook." It tells all about them—how they're so beneficial—why they're so helpful. It's full of valuable knowledge for every housekeeper.

CHESEBROUGH MFG. CO., Proprietors of ALL Vaseline Products, 36 State St., New York
 London Office: 42 Holborn Viaduct



Sound Pearl-Like Teeth

*Is More a Matter of
 Choice Than of Luck*

A thorough cleansing of the teeth night and morning is all that is required to obtain the result—provided however the proper dentifrice is used.

A good Dentifrice cannot be too carefully made. Its ingredients must be *absolutely pure* to maintain quality, and must be antiseptic—a germicide and prophylactic.

Doctor Sheffield's Crème Dentifrice

the original tooth paste

possesses all these qualities and has been recognized by Dentists the world over and by discriminating buyers since 1850 as occupying the pinnacle of perfection.

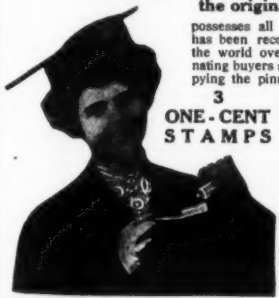
3 enclosed to the
 ONE-CENT SHEFFIELD DENTIFRICE
 STAMPS Co.

124 Broad Street
 New London, Conn.
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will bring you a
 sample tube (1-6
 regular size).

Or for 25c. in
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 we will mail you
 a full-size tube.

Save the coupons on
 cartons. They have
 a cash value.



During the Social Season, the skin can be refreshed, cleared and softened, by putting **D. & R. Perfect Cold Cream** on a hot wet cloth, and wiping face and hands leisurely. This dainty, hygienic method is superior to soap because it dissolves and brings out dirt and impurities from the pores, thus preventing dryness, chapping and premature wrinkles.

DAGGETT & RAMSDELL'S Perfect Cold Cream

is perfect for a daily clean-up. It fills every demand for a perfect toilet requisite and nothing else is considered its equal. Naturally it is imitated widely, therefore always ask for it by name. Sold in jars, 25c. up, and traveler's tubes 10c. up at best shops. Sample gratis by post.

Daggett & Ramsdell
 Dept. F
 D. & R. Building,
 West 14th St.
 New York.

Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you, I want what I asked for. Good-bye."



New Suggestions for Christmas Gifts

**Manning-
Bowman**
Quality

AN Alcohol Gas Stove, a Chafing Dish, a Tea Pot, a "Meteor" Coffee Percolator, or any cooking utensil will make a pleasing and useful gift. If these articles bear the **Manning-Bowman** trade-mark you have positive assurance of their quality. Forsale by all leading dealers. If your dealer can't supply you with the articles you wish, write for catalog 28.

MANNING, BOWMAN & CO., Meriden, Conn.

Greatest Love Story Written in 100 Years

This great heart-interest love story was written early in the nineteenth century by a French Abbe (Priest). It is not the kind of story you would expect a priest to write. It is the story of the most beautiful woman in France—the story of an unfaithful woman and her sorrows—and how those sorrows turned her vacillating affection into the pure gold of love. It is a story that has a heart thrill on every page—a story that appeals to every man or woman who ever loved, or was loved. It is the kind of story that a hungry booklover would spend days in old bookshops looking for—if he knew that such a book existed. Guy de Maupassant, the greatest French story writer, at his best, never equalled this great story. And de Maupassant, himself, says that no writer, French or American, in the past 100 years, has ever produced so strong a story as this almost unknown book.

READ THIS BOOK AT OUR RISK

The first edition of this book was subscribed for at 250 francs per copy—\$50.00 a copy in our money. And private editions costing much more than this have from time to time been printed. Now, for the first time, this wonderful book is placed within your easy reach at practically the bare cost of paper, ink, printing. The edition we offer is the best translation—written into clear, strong, vivid English that none can fail to understand and appreciate. Instead of selling this edition at a high price per copy, we are going to give it away, almost, in connection with subscriptions to the Woman's World. The Woman's World is the greatest and most fearless publication in the world—which now reaches over 9,000,000 homes. Edwin W. Sims, the U. S. District Attorney who represented the U. S. Government in the famous \$29,000,000 Standard Oil case, has two articles in the Woman's World on "The White Slave Trader of Today," and "Why Girls Go Astray." Mr. Sims says "The 'White Slave Traders' have reduced the art of ruining young girls to a national and international system." By reading these articles by the great District Attorney in connection with this book many pitfalls may be avoided. Other contributors to Woman's World are Joseph Medill Patterson, George Ade, Geo. Barr McCutcheon, Roswell Field, Opie Read, Clara Louise Burnham, Ella Wheeler Wilcox, and many others. The Woman's World is a great national publication.

OUR NOVEL OFFER

The annual subscription price of the Woman's World is 25 cents. As long as this edition of this great book lasts we will send you a copy for only 25 cents extra. Simply send us 50 cents and we will immediately deliver you a copy of this famous love story—and will enter you for a full year of the Woman's World. Best of all we take the whole risk. Our novel offer is: The pages of the book are uncut; if after cutting half the pages of the book you feel that the story is not as interesting as we represent, return the book and we will remit its cost. Surely you will want this greatest and rarest love story when it and a year's subscription to Woman's World are placed within your easy reach for only 50 cents. Send us 50 cents today, and say, "I accept your offer in Ainslee's Magazine." Send to Dept. C. 10

CURRIER PUBLISHING CO., 46-48 W. Monroe St., Chicago

Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you, I want what I asked for. Good-bye."



While the Fire is Low.

A hot breakfast in a cozy warm room starts one right for the day. A cold dining room spoils the enjoyment of the meal.

The dining room or any room in the house can be heated in a few minutes with a

PERFECTION Oil Heater

(Equipped with Smokeless Device)

For instance, you could light it in your bedroom to dress by, then carry it to the dining room, and by the time the coffee is ready, the room is warm. Impossible to turn it too high or too low—never smokes or smells—gives intense heat for 9 hours with one filling. Every heater warranted.

The **Rayo Lamp** is the best lamp for all-round household purposes. Gives a clear, steady light. Made of brass throughout and nickel plated. Equipped with the latest improved central draft burner. Handsome—simple—satisfactory. Every lamp guaranteed.

If you cannot get heater and lamp at your dealer's, write to our nearest agency.

STANDARD OIL COMPANY

(Incorporated)



Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you, I want what I asked for. Good-bye."

Pinehurst

NORTH CAROLINA

The Center of Winter
Out-of-Door Life in
the Healthiest Section
of the Middle South

No resort offers a greater variety
of wholesome attractions than

PINEHURST

These include

Four Excellent Hotels
Two 18-Hole Golf Courses
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A Country Club House
Livery of Select Saddle Horses
40,000-Acre Private Shooting
Preserve (Good Guides and
Trained Dogs), Tennis Courts
Trap Shooting Grounds, Etc.

Send for illustrated literature and list of
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No Consumptives Received at Pinehurst

*Through Pullman service from New York to
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night out from New York, Boston, Cleveland,
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and giving full details of attractions, or address*

PINEHURST GENERAL OFFICE
PINEHURST, NORTH CAROLINA
or LEONARD TUFTS, Owner, Boston, Mass.



Rexall

"Ninety-three"

Hair Tonic

"One of the 300"

Your money back if Rexall "93" Hair Tonic does not do what we claim for it.

We guarantee satisfaction or return its purchase price without question upon request at the store where purchased.

Do you suppose we would dare make this offer unless Rexall "93" Hair Tonic was a superior article?

Do you know of any other Hair Tonic being sold under such a positive guarantee?

Please remember this fact when next you buy. We want you to use Rexall "93" Hair Tonic. We want you to know it as we know it. And we will assume all risk of its not proving better than you even expected.

It is an indispensable and delightfully fragrant toilet requisite

The choice of fastidious people

Because it will cleanse and keep the scalp and hair in a perfectly healthy condition. It stimulates and nourishes—relieves irritation of the scalp—eradicates dandruff—prevents baldness—promotes a healthy hair growth—besides keeping the hair naturally abundant, soft and silky. Will not gum nor stain.

And when we tell you this please remember that upon the slightest hint of dissatisfaction your money will be cheerfully refunded by the druggist who sold it to you.

Now, honestly, don't you think you had better buy a bottle to-day and try it?

Two sizes

**50 cents
and \$1.00**

Only one druggist in a place sells Rexall "93" Hair Tonic. Look for **The Rexall Store**

in over 2,000 towns and cities in the United States. Write for free booklet "Treatise on Care of the Hair."

United Drug Company
44 Leon St., Boston
Mass.

44

Sign and deliver this coupon with \$1 to The Rexall Store in your town. It will entitle you to a \$1 bottle of Rexall "93" Hair Tonic and a 25c jar of Rexall "93" Shampoo Paste. If no Rexall Store in your town, send \$1 with coupon direct to us, and the Hair Tonic and Shampoo Paste will be delivered to your residence, all charges prepaid. This offer is limited. Send to-day.

United Drug Co., Boston, Mass.

Name.....

Address.....

Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you, I want what I asked for. Good-bye."

Kenyon OVERCOATS

Kenyon Overcoats have a distinctive style. When you examine a Kenyon Overcoat you will buy it, because superiority of material and workmanship, price for price, is apparent throughout the line.

You will receive the invisible advantage that your Kenyon Overcoat will hold its stylish shape as long as you wear it. The Kenyon features of construction, adapted from our discovery of how to make our Kenreign Raincoats hold their shape, make Kenyon Overcoats superior.

Send us your dealer's name and address—we will see that you are supplied. Tell us the type of garment you desire and about what you wish to pay. We will immediately send you Fashion Plates and samples of cloth, or, if you wish, forward complete garments to a dealer for your inspection, enabling you, at your own convenience, to examine these celebrated coats.

C. KENYON CO., 23 Union Square, New York
Address Mail to Factories, 809 Pacific St., Brooklyn, N. Y.



"RHEUMA-NOT"

TRADE MARK REGISTERED
LEGGINS

PATENTED JANUARY 26, '26

**For MEN, WOMEN
and CHILDREN**

Prevent and relieve

RHEUMATISM

Warm, stylish, durable and comfortable. Worn inside the shoe and over the stocking.



Made of pure
Australian wool,
healthful and
hygienic. Sold
by the makers,

**ROSENWASSER
BROTHERS
472 Broadway
New York City**

\$1.50

a pair.

Delivered pre-
paid to any address
in the U. S. on re-
ceipt of the price.

Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you, I want what I asked for. Good-bye."

Which Price Do You Pay?

Our "Come-Packt" Price? or the retail dealer's?

Shipping, showing and selling furniture in the ordinary way more than doubles the cost. Freight on assembled, finished pieces is high; store rent is high; salesmen's commissions, clerks' wages and dealers' profits must all be added. You pay them at the retailer's—you save them by buying of us. Here is an object lesson.

This "Come-Packt" Morris Chair in Quartered Oak



No. 1

Handsome Mission
Design with Chase
Leather Cushions

Costs you at any store **\$25**
(and good value)

The dealer has to pay for it, delivered, \$18.50; the price to the jobber or wholesaler is \$14.00; BUT the "Come-Packt" plan saves still more, and we will sell DIRECT TO YOU, ready to set up, at **\$10.50**

YOU SAVE \$14.50 on this one piece by the "Come-Packt" way of buying furniture of us, **FLAT** instead of assembled. You put in the fastenings and add the stain for finishing. No chance for a doubt when we say "Solid Quarter-Sawed Oak."

You see what you get, for everything comes "in the white." Prices include everything needed to quickly and easily put together and finish.

THIS \$18 LIBRARY TABLE

Solid Quarter-Sawed Oak, complete with our new invention, the swing drawer, all fittings and finish, costs you "Come-Packt," **\$6.75**

Practical Xmas Gifts

WRITE TODAY for our beautiful new free Catalog, full of money-saving opportunities in artistic, handsome, Mission Furniture, prices from \$3.00 up.

Your money back if you are not.

INTERNATIONAL MFG. CO., 1908 Edwin St., Ann Arbor, Mich.



No. 306



HOLIDAY PRESIDENT SUSPENDERS

The best, most attractive, most sensible Christmas Gift you could give any man is a pair of "President" Suspenders in a beautiful holiday box.

If he has never worn "Presidents" your gift will be doubly appreciated for you'll acquaint him with the finest, most comfortable, most durable suspenders ever designed.

Be sure you get "Presidents." Other suspenders are offered in fancy boxes, but they are not "Presidents," not so comfortable as "Presidents"—and every man knows it.



1909 ART CALENDAR

is a masterpiece. It consists of four panels, three of them reproducing in eight colors the exquisite work of celebrated French Artists, together with an artistic cover panel on which the calendar is printed. There is no printing or advertising on any of the art panels, they are worthy of frames or suitable for decorating any room. *Ready Now.*

Order at once, as the demand is heavy and the supply limited. Sent post-paid on receipt of 25c.

**PRESIDENT
SUSPENDERS**

50c

**IN HOLIDAY
BOXES**

Sold by all dealers, or sent prepaid to any address on receipt of price. Different weights and lengths to suit all requirements. Buy today as many pairs as you need for your Christmas giving.

Maker's Guarantee—Satisfaction, new pair, or money back.

THE C. A. EDGARTON MFG. COMPANY

711 Main Street, Shirley, Mass.

Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you, I want what I asked for. Good-bye."



Collectors and Makers of Fine Furs.

Plymouth Furs

Choice Furs the Richest of Gifts

Among the practical Christmas gifts, choice furs alone rank in richness with precious stones and rare laces. The natural lustre and elegance of Furs makes them peculiarly adapted for refined gifts for personal adornment. "Plymouth Furs" are both practical and elegant and are so designed that they retain the natural lustre and exquisite richness of the pelt in the finished garment.

Write for Our Style Book B.

It tells about furs. It tells how, situated in the center of the great fur bearing district of America, the "Plymouth Fur Company" is enabled to secure the choicest pelts.

It tells of the great care exercised during every process of construction in the making of these pelts into practical, comfortable and fashionable garments. It explains the great saving that results from your dealing direct with the maker, be your expenditure \$5 or \$5,000. A superbly illustrated 64-page Style Book sent free on request.

Automobile Furs. In a special department, we make modish fur Automobile garments for Men and Women. These garments are exclusive in the extreme, rigidly adhering to the most recent European styles.

Men's Furs. Fur Coats for Street, Automobile and Driving Wear. Fur-lined man-tailored Coats—Chauffeur's Coats. Fur Caps and Gauntlets.

Women's Furs. Fur Coats, Jackets, Neck-pieces, Muffs and Fur-lined Coats in a vast variety of styles.

PLYMOUTH FUR CO., DEPT. B., MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.

—Established 1882.—

Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you, I want what I asked for. Good-bye."



White—Whiter—Whitest

Many soaps are almost white, some are still whiter, but only one is whitest—Fairy Soap. The reason is the quality of fats and oils used—Fairy contains only edible products. There are no dyes, high perfumes or adulterations to deceive the eye or delude the nostril.

Fairy is honest soap—all the way through. Its price, FIVE CENTS, is not the measure of its quality.

THE N. K. FAIRBANK COMPANY,
CHICAGO.



"Have You a Little 'Fairy' in Your Home?"

Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you, I want what I asked for. Good-bye."

No Stropping

No Honing



Give Him a Gillette Safety Razor for Christmas

HE will use it, never fear! And thank you from his heart every time he shaves.

Over two million men are using the Gillette—any one of them will tell you he would not be without it for ten times its cost.

Shaving in the old way is the bane of a man's life. It means time wasted at the barber-shop—or tedious stropping and scraping with the old-fashioned razor, with the certainty of cuts and scratches if he is nervous or in a hurry. Besides, as you know, he is not always shaved when he ought to be.

The Gillette makes shaving easy.

Takes only five minutes for a smooth, satisfying shave, no matter how rough the beard or tender the skin.

No stropping, no honing. Any man can use it. It is the one razor that is safe—*cannot cut his face*—and it is the only razor that can be adjusted for a light or a close shave.

A man is conservative. He takes to the Gillette like a duck to water once he gets acquainted—but, as with other improvements, it sometimes takes a woman to lead him to it.

The Gillette makes a beautiful gift, with its triple silver-plated handle, in velvet lined, full leather case.

Standard set, as illustrated above, \$5.00.

Combination sets, \$6.50 to \$50.00. Send for illustrated booklet today.

The Gillette is on sale at all leading jewelry, drug, cutlery, hardware and sporting goods stores. If your dealer cannot supply you write to us.

New York
Times Building

GILLETTE SALES CO.
255 Kimball Building, Boston

Chicago
Stock Exchange Building

Factories: Boston, London, Berlin, Paris, Montreal

Gillette Safety Razor

NO STROPPING NO HONING

Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you, I want what I asked for. Good-bye."

Schlitz

Indian Girl Calendar

for 1909

Is in panel form seven inches wide and thirty-six inches long. It is beautifully lithographed in twelve printings and has the roughened finish like burlap. The dates are clearly pictured on tabs of birch bark.

The central figure is the beautiful Indian Girl typifying the goodness and purity of

Schlitz Malt Extract

a food, a digester and a tonic

It is richest in the food and tonic values of barley and hops.

It is brewed in careful cleanliness. It is aged and sterilized to avoid biliousness and impurity.

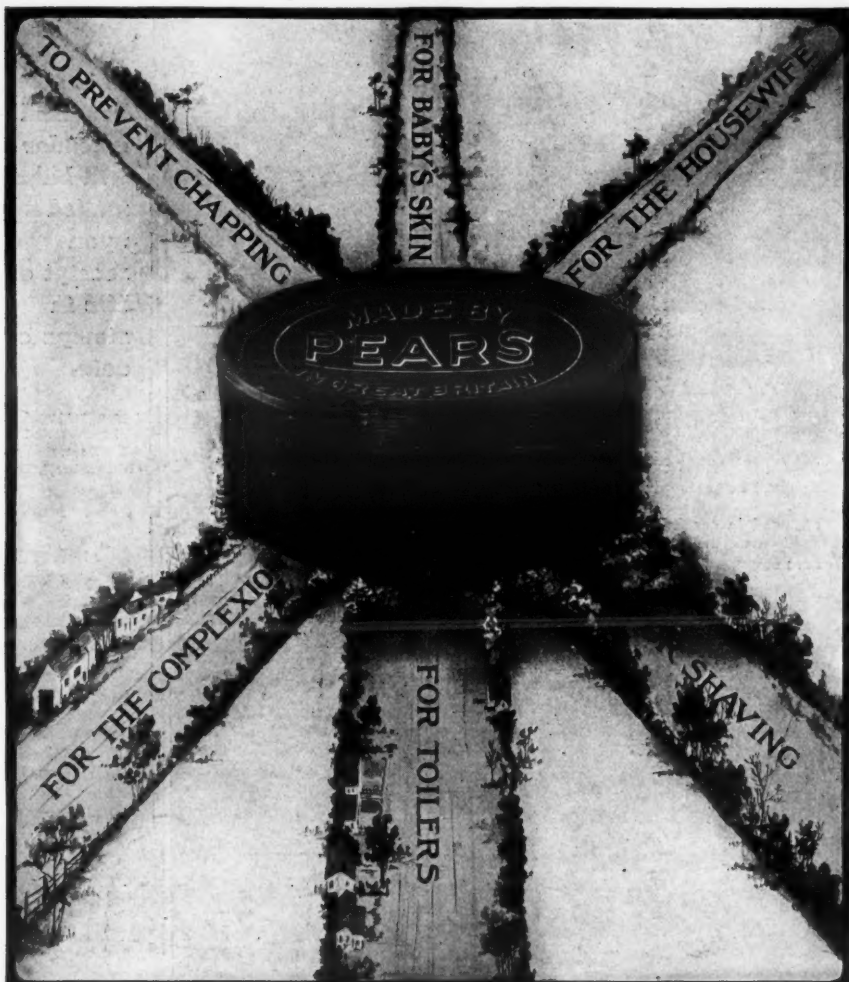
Be sure next time to get Schlitz Malt Extract.



This beautiful calendar will be mailed upon receipt of 10c in stamps or coin.

JOS. SCHLITZ
BREWING CO.
Dept. 15
Milwaukee, Wis.

Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you, I want what I asked for. Good-bye."



ALL ROADS LEAD TO
Pears' Soap

OF ALL SCENTED SOAPS PEARS' OTTO OF ROSE IS THE BEST.
"All rights secured."

Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you, I want what I asked for. Good-bye."



Under the Veil

beauty cannot be concealed: its fragrant charm like that of a rose cannot be hidden. The underlying charm of beauty is the sweet magic of dainty refinement, the fascinating power of perfect health.

RUBIFOAM

the delicious liquid dentifrice insures clean white teeth and fragrant breath, essentials to health and refinement. *A beauty truth:*

"IT IS WISE TO USE RUBIFOAM"

25¢ Everywhere. *Sample free.* Address, E. W. HOYT & CO., LOWELL, MASS.

Figure It Out!!!

Coarse Scouring Soaps or powders cost from 5 to 10 cents a package—for instance, Capitol Scouring Soap05

Metal Polishes cost from 10 cents to 25 cents—a small can, say10

A preparation for cleaning glass costs10

Total25

Why not buy a cake of *Bon Ami* for 10 cents that does the work of all three and save from 15 to 35 cents?

In addition, *Bon Ami* has the following distinct merits:

As a scouring soap, *Bon Ami* is not wasteful, nor will it scratch or "wear out" any surface, thereby improving the appearance and prolonging the usefulness of all articles cleaned.

As a metal polish, *Bon Ami* is clean and neat to handle, and on account of the absence of acid, makes the most lasting polish of any preparation.

As a glass cleaner, *Bon Ami* does away with muss and slops when cleaning windows or polishing mirrors.

It's worth a quarter—costs a dime.

Ask your grocer.

A Christmas Box

... of

Shawknit
TRADE MARK

Socks

"SHAWKNIT Socks" have been known to you a great many years. They are sold almost everywhere.

Just the correct Christmas present for father, husband, or son.

When you present "SHAWKNIT Socks" you are making a gift of the best that are made, plus the assurance that they will please the man who gets them, and a realization that your present will last for a long time and give great comfort and pleasure.

"SHAWKNIT Socks" are the best wearing socks. Every pair guaranteed by us. Our Shawknit trademark is plainly stamped on the toes.

For more than 30 years "SHAWKNIT Socks" have been the most popular American-made goods. They are free from seams—properly shaped in the process of knitting—fit comfortably—colors absolutely fast and pure.

This Beautiful Christmas Box contains six pairs of "SHAWKNIT" Cotton Socks—two of black, two of tan, and two of navy—all the same popular medium light weight for only \$1.50.

Ask your dealer for style 19S 938—the style number of this special assortment.

Try Your Dealer First

If he does not have them in stock his jobber will supply him. Otherwise please mail \$1.50 to us and we will send this beautiful Christmas Box of socks to you, transportation charges prepaid by us, to any address in the United States.

These "SHAWKNIT Socks" are made in sizes 9 to 11½ inclusive. Please mention size wanted when ordering.

Our Beautiful Colored Catalog will be sent free to any address. Write for it.

SHAW STOCKING COMPANY, 30 Shaw Street, LOWELL, MASS.